Radiance

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Front Cover Photo: Conclusion of initiation service at the Third International Kriya Yoga Congress. *San Jose, California, 2010.*

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Seminar in the CSA meditation hall in 1977

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Written by Roy Eugene Davis
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Center for Spiritual Awareness P. O. Box 7 Lakemont, Georgia 30552
Offices and Retreat Center on CSA Lane off Lake Rabun Road, Lakemont.
Tel: 706-782-4723 weekdays 8 a.m. – 3 p.m. Fax: 706-782-4560
For retreat reservations and book orders: info@csa-davis.org
To e-mail Roy Eugene Davis: rd@csa-davis.org
Web site: www.csa-davis.org

Meditation techniques are tools used to have desired results. When you have done that, you no longer need those tools.
– Paramahansa Yogananda (1893 – 1952)

Productive Meditation Practice: Part 2

technique A specific method or procedure used to achieve aims or accomplish purposes.

meditation Steady concentration [flow of attention] on a chosen meditative object or ideal (*Patanjali's Yoga-Sutra 3:2*).

Anyone who is mentally competent and emotionally stable can meditate effectively if the desire to learn and to practice is sincere. The degree of success that new meditators will have can be predicted by observing their mental attitude and behaviors. If they are attentive, disciplined, and goal-directed, they will be able to meditate skillfully and have satisfying results. If they are inattentive, undisciplined, and nurture vague hopes or ideas about their future circumstances, they will tend to allow those characteristics to blur their awareness and interfere with their spiritual practices.

A characteristic of individuals who live skillfully in the secular realm and/or are spiritually conscious is their ability to accomplish purposes they consider to be of value. They are success-oriented. If they don't know how to succeed, they learn what to do and effectively do it.

Just as the circumstances and experiences that people have correspond with their habitual mental attitudes, states of consciousness, and behaviors, so their spiritual growth, or lack of it, corresponds with their habitual mental attitudes, states of consciousness, and behaviors. That is why constructive, intentional living and emotional maturity are as important as metaphysical study and meditation practice.

Among Paramahansa Yogananda's disciples, those who he said were proficient meditators and were spiritually advanced, lived skillfully and were successful in their business endeavors or professions. He used to say, "I am pleased when they are examples of spirituality and practicality."

Various forms of meditation practice—and techniques—can be helpful if they are understood and skillfully used. They may include:

- Prayerful meditation. Asking ultimate Reality (God) as you know, or imagine, it to be. Examples:

  Help me clarify my mind and awareness, have my consciousness illumined, and know my true nature and ultimate Reality.

  Infinite God (or a word or words that are meaningful to you), Babaji, Lahiri Mahasaya, Sri Yukteswar, Paramahansa Yogananda, (your guru's name if you have one), help me clarify my mind and awareness, have my consciousness illumined, and fully awaken to Self-Realization.

Then stay alert, patiently sit, observe changes in mental states and your awareness, and be receptive to what can emerge from within you. You may change how you pray as your understanding of your true nature and relationship with the Infinite changes. Pray sincerely from your essence of being. Imagine and feel that you are one with the wholeness of ultimate Reality.

- Affirmative meditation. Use an affirmation that pleases you. Examples:

  The radiant purity of my essence of being purifies my mind and illumines my consciousness.

  At the innermost level of my essence of being I am a pure conscious unit of ultimate Reality.

Speak an affirmation audibly a few times, whisper it a few times, speak it mentally a few times, then be very still and experience the results.

- Mantra meditation. With attention and awareness focused in the front and higher regions of the brain, mentally speak the

mantra until your attention is absorbed in the process. If using a two-syllable or two-word mantra (examples: hong-saw, so-hum, or Om-God), they may be mentally spoken with inhalation and exhalation. After a while, when the mind is calm, disregard breath awareness and focus on the mantra. Eventually let the mantra fade away and abide in the calm, clear state of awareness. Listen to subtle sound frequencies in or around your head until a clear, steady sound prevails. Consider it to be an aspect of the Om vibration and expand your consciousness in it.

- Pranayama. Alternate nostril breathing may be practiced a few times at the start of the meditation session to calm the mind. Kriya pranayama can be practiced, then sit silently in the calm state of awareness that results. When meditating for 30 minutes to an hour, or longer, if you notice that you are not attentive, be more intentional or use a supplemental meditation technique (jyoti mudra or chanting Om though the chakras) to internalize your attention.
- Visualization. Imagine that your mind and awareness are pure and that you are spiritually enlightened. Doing this can detach you from ego-consciousness and prepare you to actually be Self-knowing.
- Contemplative meditation: intellectual and intuitive examination with alert expectation of discovery. Contemplate your essence (true nature), ultimate Reality, metaphysical themes, or whatever you want to know. Discern the difference between what is true and what cannot be true.
- Meditation on an object or ideal. Examples: your essence of being, ultimate Reality, the Om vibration, subjective perceptions of light, or Self-awareness. Preliminary stages of practice may result in a sense of identification with what is contemplated. Aspire to be detached from those stages until you can be established in conscious Self-knowing.

Learn to effectively use meditation techniques that you already know rather than want to learn "advanced" methods. I heard Paramahansa Yogananda say, "It is possible to be Self-realized

by devotion [sincere aspiration to be Self-realized and surrender of one's mistaken sense of self-identity] alone, but devotion along with Kriya Yoga practices make an unbeatable combination." Kriya Yoga lifestyle regimens nurture physical, psychological, and environmental well-being. The meditation methods taught in our Kriya Yoga tradition calm the mind, clarify awareness, arouse dormant soul powers, and unveil and bring forth our innate qualities and knowledge.

Lifestyle regimens and meditation methods are emphasized because they produce and attract favorable results. They are neither "secret" nor do they belong to any person or organized endeavor. New initiates may be advised not to talk about what they learned when they were initiated so they may be more inclined to practice rather than be too outwardly directed. Practice the forms of meditation and the various techniques until you are comfortable with them and can easily have satisfying results.

Be alert and attentive, avoid inclinations to force anything to happen. Constructive thinking, skillful living, and attentive meditation practice can remove psychological and physiological conditions that blur consciousness and resist innate impulses to emerge (*Yoga-Sutra 1:2*). Calm meditative states are processed by the front lobes of the brain associated with concentration, impulse control, and decision-making. Excessive effort during meditation practice or other creative endeavors may interfere with natural flows of consciousness.

Meditate effectively every day:

- When possible, have a specific place and time for daily practice and it will be easier to be fully attentive to it.
- Sit upright, poised and relaxed.
- Pray, affirm, or use your usual form or ritual of preparation.
- Settle into your practice routine.
- After using a technique, sit for a while in the calm silence, allowing meditation to flow spontaneously. Stay alert and be attentive to what occurs.
- Conclude by radiating compassionate good will into the collective consciousness of the planet and the universe.

- Endeavor to stay superconscious. Remember that superconscious influences continue to purify your mind and awareness and enliven your body after meditation.
- While you are engaged in activities and relationships, know that necessary material resources and supportive events, circumstances, and relationships harmoniously emerge for your highest good and the highest good of all who are influenced by your mental states, states of consciousness, and actions.

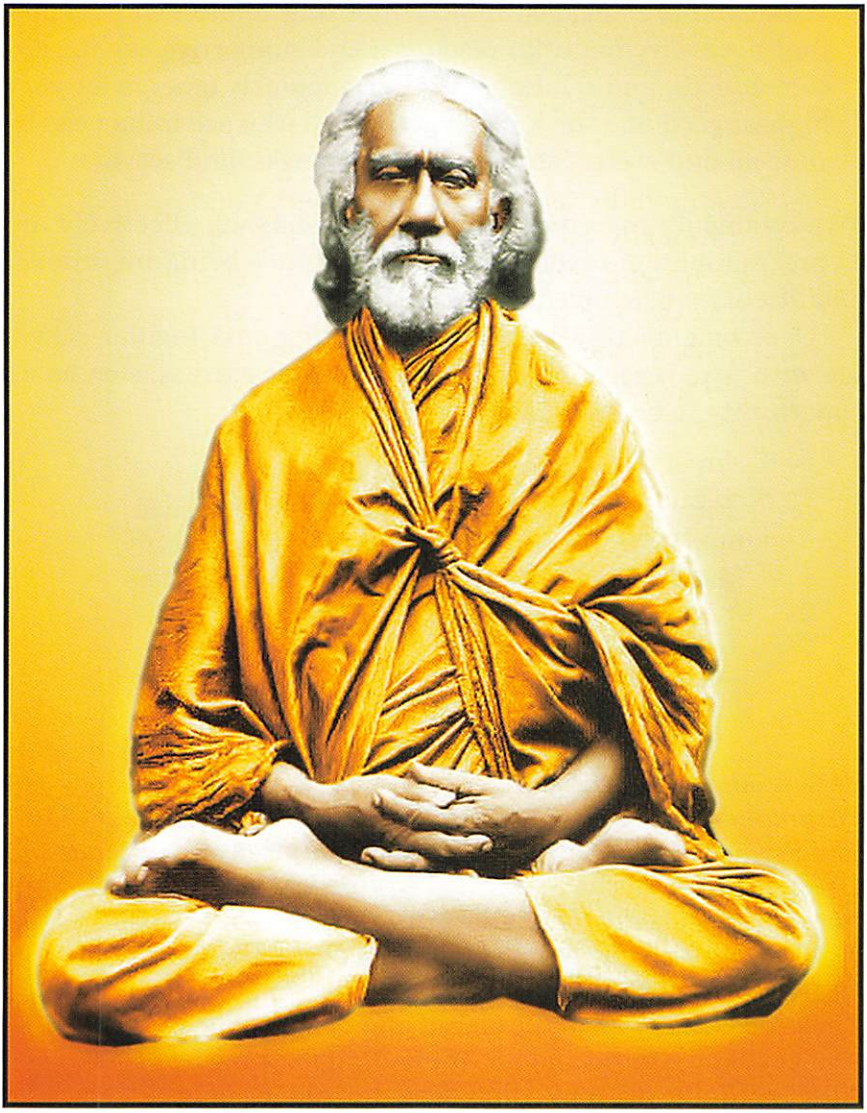
Two commonly reported obstacles to meditating effectively are 1) procrastination (avoiding practice); 2) not being intentional and attentive when meditating.

Overcome debilitating habits by sitting on a regular schedule with firm resolve to stay alert. Consider each session as an opportunity to be more Self- and God-knowing.

Affirm With Intention

Firmly resolved to be spiritually enlightened
in my current incarnation, I am always wisely
and diligently attentive to my personal duties
and spiritual practices.

Recommended Reading:
Paramahansa Yogananda As I Knew Him Also on audio CDs
The Science of Self-Realization (Commentaries on *Patanjali's Yoga-Sutra* and the *Shandilya Upanishad*)
Absolute Knowledge That Liberates Consciousness Also on CDs
The Eternal Way (The Inner Meaning of the Bhagavad Gita)
Order online at **www.csa-davis.org**
These books may also be ordered and downloaded on an **Amazon.com Kindle** and an **Apple iPad** for a modest cost.
Also for Kindle or Apple iPad, **free downloads** of booklets: *An Easy Guide to Meditation*, *How You Can Use Your Creative Imagination*, and *The Simplicity of Spiritual Enlightenment.*
Tell your spiritual friends about these publications and how to obtain them.



Swami Sri Yukteswar (May 19, 1855 – March 9, 1936)
Paramahansa Yogananda's guru

My thinking is not always rational and my behaviors are often erratic or unpredictable. Should I wait until I am mentally organized and purposeful before establishing a daily meditation routine?

Meditating daily for 20 to 30 minutes should empower you to think rationally and act more decisively. First, meditate to manage stress and calm your mind, then progress to the more advanced methods. Even during the early stages of practice, remember that, at the core of your being, knowledge of ultimate Reality and its processes is within you. You are not attempting to become spiritual; what you do can allow your innate qualities to emerge. Grow to emotional maturity and train yourself to think, feel, and act with a sense of meaningful purposes for living. Wherever you are, whatever environmental conditions are present, you are always a spiritual being in the wholeness of ultimate Reality.

I grew up in lower middle class circumstances and did not go to college. It has not been easy to change some of the small mental attitudes, rigid states of consciousness, and ways of thinking and behaving that were acquired or to imagine myself as being other than I perceive myself to be. What can I do to live more successfully and grow spiritually?

Outgrowing ordinary (conditioned) mental states, states of consciousness, and ways of acting and reacting is necessary for almost everyone who wants to live successfully and awaken to Self- and God-realization. Even when we know what we need to do, it is not always easy to do it.

Imagine how you will think, feel, and act when you are as free and competent as you aspire to be. Because you are a spiritual being, you can choose to think constructively, expand your consciousness, and act decisively to produce and attract the events and conditions you want to have. Improve your understanding

of higher realities and meditate on a regular schedule and you will soon experience satisfying spiritual growth. Don't compare yourself with anyone. Grow to spiritual and emotional maturity in your own natural way.

Most of the time I am bored, apathetic, and disinterested in doing anything. What can I do to get out of this situation, which I know is of my own doing?

Since you know you are allowing the situation to exist, you can change it. If your problem is laziness or lack of knowledge, motivate yourself to think and act productively and acquire the knowledge you need to have. If you need professional help to cure depression, obtain it. Above all, don't talk about yourself with others and don't complain or be resentful about anything.

When I meditate I am sometimes so absorbed in what I contemplate that I feel I am one with it. After such experiences, I am not aware of being any different.

Complete, or almost complete, identification with an object of meditation that provides an opportunity to withdraw from mental and emotional states won't purify the mind or illumine your consciousness. Explore such experiences now and then if you want to, while staying alert and observant. Eventually go beyond them to experience superconsciousness. After learning to be superconscious when you are meditating, learn to maintain superconsciousness after meditation. When you are more Self-knowing, you will always be superconscious because that is your true nature.

> Gradually, the meditator should become still. With the intellect firmly concentrated on the reality of the Self, let nothing else be contemplated.
> Constantly practicing yoga (oneness), the devotee free from all restraints easily has realization (experience and knowledge) of God that bestows boundless happiness.
> – *The Bhagavad Gita 6:25 and 28*

Could it be helpful to wear a bracelet of pure gold, silver, and copper—or a pendant or ring with a gemstone selected for me by a vedic astrologer or an ayurvedic practitioner?

In Paramahansa Yogananda's book *Autobiography of a Yogi* he wrote that Sri Yukteswar told him how subtle radiations of certain metals and gems could be used to counteract electrical and magnetic influences that might otherwise be troublesome.

For general purposes, Sri Yukteswar recommended a bracelet of pure gold, silver, and copper wires. Until a few decades ago the cost of such a bracelet was modest. In February 2012 an ounce of gold was priced at more than $1700 and an ounce of silver was around $30. With the added cost of having such a bracelet made, the total cost would be more than $2000—not a realistic price for many people.

I cannot accurately answer your question—about the possible helpfulness of wearing such a bracelet, or a gemstone selected by a vedic astrologer or ayurvedic practitioner. I don't know of any reliable studies that have been done. Some people who told me that they "like" to wear their bracelet or gemstone haven't described any actual benefits. Although some people may actually benefit from wearing them, there is the possibility that an occasional placebo effect (a positive response that occurs because of one's belief or faith) is helpful. Also, a bracelet, ring, or another object may be thought as a *talisman* (French, Spanish, Italian origin) perhaps with magical power that attracts good fortune or reminds the wearer of significant relationships, circumstances, or events.

If you want to experiment by wearing such a bracelet or gemstones, stay within your budget and avoid superstitious ideas and behaviors.

Note: For more information, read "The Inner World of Colors, Gemstones, Metals, and Mantras" (pages 129–155) in my book *An Easy Guide to Ayurveda*.

I, and some of my friends, are sometimes disturbed by predictions of serious economic troubles, political discord, changes in weather patterns, and natural disasters that are widely published. How should we respond to them? Did Paramahansa Yogananda make specific predictions about future events?

Avoid allowing your mind and emotions to be troubled. Just adhere to your constructive endeavors, nurture your spiritual growth, and inspire others with your optimistic attitude.

I do not know of any specific predictions made by my guru. He did often say that the future would be wonderful and that many millions of people would aspire to be Self-realized. A few of my brother and sister disciples sometimes say that he made dire predictions, but I think they are merely pessimistic.

What is the best way to increase the number of kriya pranayamas? Is it helpful to do a high number of them? Some kriya teachers say that we should breathe through the mouth when doing them, others say to breathe through the nose. How should we do it? When should we learn the higher kriya meditation techniques?

To increase the number of repetitions of kriya pranayama, simply do as many as are comfortable to do.

It is better to do fewer kriya pranayamas with concentrated endeavor than to do many in a superficial way.

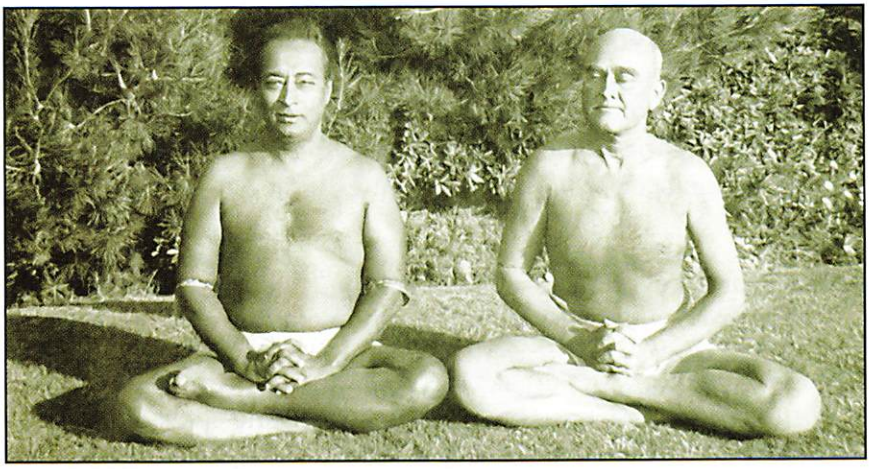
New initiates are told to breathe through the mouth to be able to feel coolness in the moist throat, with inhalation, that is transferred to the spine. After a few days, or weeks, the same effect can be had when breathing through the nose.

Most kriya initiates don't need to learn other techniques because they haven't effectively used the basic ones: mantra, kriya pranayama, chanting Om in the chakras, and meditation in Om. Paramahansa Yogananda said that samadhi could be realized by using a mantra. The aim of meditation practice is for the wavelike movements in the mind and awareness to stop so that Self-realization will effortlessly occur. Sit longer and go deeper in the silence.

Did James J. Lynn's wealth benefit others besides some of his family members and Self-Realization Fellowship?

James J. Lynn (1892–1955) gave several hundreds of thousands of dollars to Self-Realization Fellowship in the 1930s and 40s. Before he died he donated one million dollars in stock to SRF and bequeathed the organization two million dollars in his will. In 1951, after a Kriya Yoga initiation service in Los Angeles, Paramahansa Yogananda gave him the spiritual name Rajasi Janakananda and announced that he would be the next president of SRF.

His nephew, Eugene Lynn (1918–1999) became the owner of his insurance businesses in 1954. Several years later, Eugene Lynn and his wife donated many millions of dollars to medical and educational institutions in south Florida. Lynn University in Boca Raton, Florida, 30 miles south of West Palm Beach was named for the Lynn family. It is an independent, coed, residential liberal arts institution that has approximately 4,000 students, many of them from other countries. Five of the buildings on the university campus were funded by Eugene Lynn and his wife. Search *Lynn University* on the Internet.



Paramahansa Yogananda and James J. Lynn
Middle 1940s

NEWS

Plan to be at the Fourth International Kriya Yoga Congress in San Jose, California, next year (March 7,8,9). Tell other people about this special event. (Back cover of this issue of *Radiance*).

2012 Meditation Retreats at CSA Headquarters
See schedules on the facing page. Reserve your participation when your travel plans are firm.

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Request free *Truth Journals* to give to people who you know are interested in self-improvement and spiritual growth. Let us know how many to send, then immediately distribute them.

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eBooks Available
See page 7 for details about ordering books (modest fee) and booklets (free) for an Amazon.com Kindle reader or Apple iPad. During December and January almost 18,000 free copies of our *An Easy Guide to Meditation* booklet were downloaded.

A Spanish language edition of *Seven Lessons in Conscious Living* (translated by Gloria Donohue-Little) is available as an eBook.

Realization of one's essence of being provides knowledge of the difference between it and ordinary states of awareness. From that superior realization, exceptional powers of perception and extraordinary abilities are unveiled. When used only for external purposes, they are obstacles to samadhi. They should mostly be used to weaken and remove troublesome subconscious tendencies.
– Patanjali's Yoga-Sutra 3:36,37,38

Meditation and lifestyle routines taught by Roy Eugene Davis. Kriya initiation Thursdays at 1 p.m. during the week long retreats. Guest houses. Vegetarian meals served.

2012 Retreats
Week Long: June 11 – 15 July 2 – 6 August 13 – 17
Weekends: October 20 – 21 November 17 – 18
Holy Season Meditation: December 1 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

2012 Private retreats
CSA members and Kriya Initiates
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Retreat Reservations: *Reserve only when your travel plans are firm.*
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Next Year (2013) in San Jose, California March 7, 8, 9

THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL

KRIYA YOGA CONGRESS

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Dr. Christopher Key Chapple: Patanjali's Yoga Sutras
Navin and Pratima Doshi Professor of Indic and Comparative Theology at Loyola Marymount University, author of *Yoga and the Luminous: Patanjali's Spiritual Path to Freedom.*

Phillip Goldberg: How Indian Spirituality Influenced the West
An interfaith minister, founder of Spiritual Wellness and Healing Associates, author of *American Veda: From Emerson and the Beatles to Yoga and Meditation*

Ellen Grace O'Brian: The Transmission of Kriya Yoga Traditions Through the Ages

Gitanjali kirtan band and One Voice Choir Vegetarian Banquet

Request Kriya Congress Brochures from:
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Or read the brochure & make reservations on these web sites:
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Click on 2013 Kriya Yoga Congress Brochure

Response / 2010 Summer Radiance

NOTICE: 2013 Kriya Yoga Congress, San Jose, California. After the enclosed issue of *Radiance* was printed, we were informed that the name of the hotel where the congress will be held has been changed to **Holiday Inn San Jose-Airport.** Location and telephone numbers are the same.

Name _____

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_____

[ ] CSA Membership

If you are not yet a member of Center for Spiritual Awareness, you are cordially invited to be apply now. Members receive *Truth Journal* and a 16-page *Studies in Truth lesson* six times a year. Members who are kriya initiates also receive *Radiance* newsletter four times a year. You will have the satisfaction of knowing that you are actively participating in an international movement dedicated to individual and global enlightenment. Donate monthly, bi-monthly, bi-annually, or annually. CSA is 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation. Tax number 58-0942053. Use form below or apply online at **www.csa-davis.org**

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Dialogue: Use the back of this form to write questions for possible use a future issue of *Radiance*.

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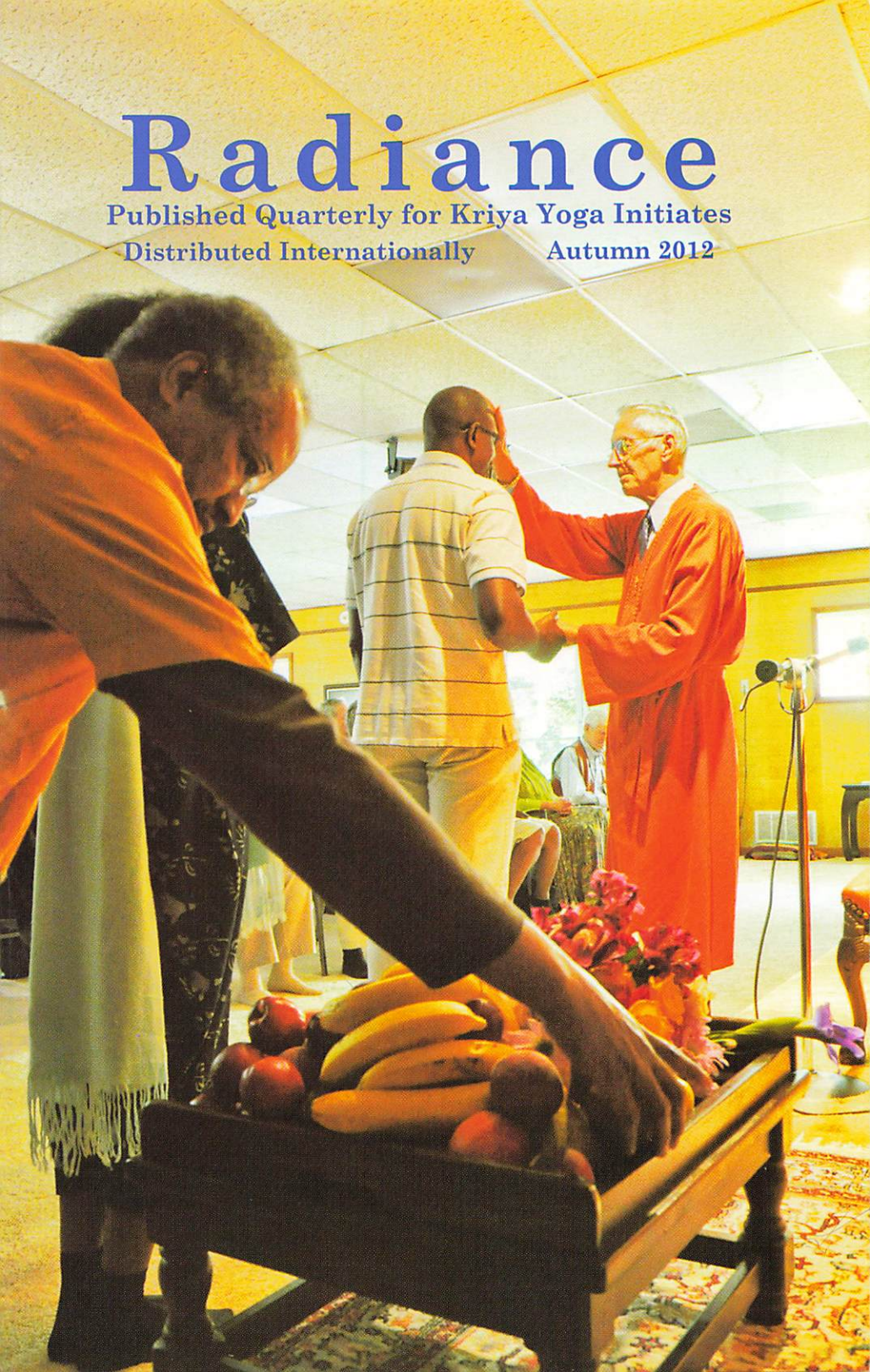

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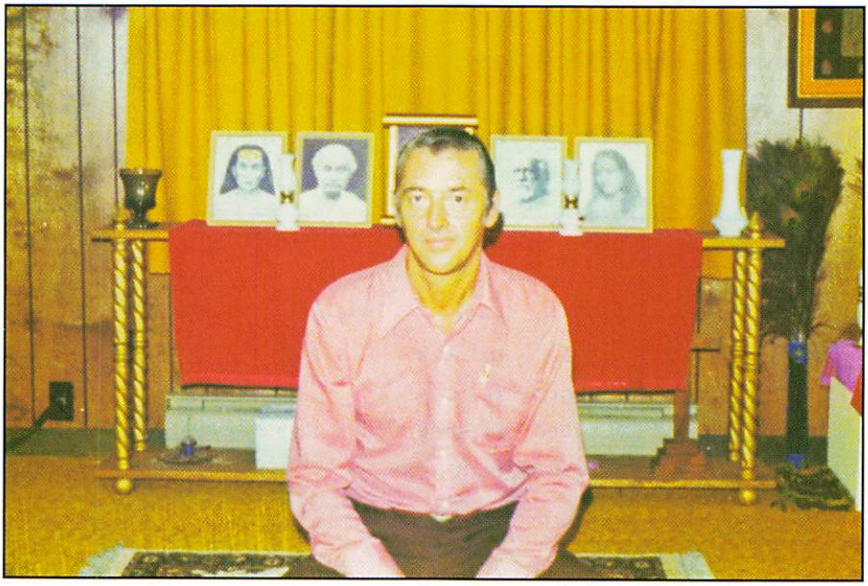

Roy Eugene Davis, summer 1976, in what is now the bookstore at CSA headquarters. The building was being used as a temporary classroom while the Meditation Hall was being constructed.

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Web site: www.csa-davis.org

Discard the mistaken idea that there is a separation
between spiritual and material realities.
– Paramahansa Yogananda (1893 – 1952)

Inspired Thinking and Practical Living

inspired Infused with spiritual influences that emerge from one's essence of being.

practical Beneficially useful. Of real, enduring value. Having or demonstrating rational thinking or good judgment.

After one of Paramahansa Yogananda's public talks, a person who was newly introduced to him, asked, "What do you teach?" He replied, "I teach high thinking and plain living." When he spoke at public gatherings or talked informally with disciples, he frequently emphasized the importance of maintaining a balance of spirituality and "practicality." He taught Kriya Yoga practices with simple words and silently demonstrated them with calm, appropriate manners and purposeful actions.

The words *karma* and *kriya* are derived from the Sanskrit verb root "to do"—indicating action, movement, process, or influences which cause or allow corresponding effects to occur. Inspired Kriya Yoga practitioners think and act with intention to achieve their mundane aims and allow spiritual growth to spontaneously emerge. They do what is necessary as spiritual duty without avoiding responsible actions or allowing thoughts or behaviors to be influenced by moods, whims, or the opinions or behaviors of others. They know the immediate practical and long-term spiritual value of disciplined thinking and actions.

In chapter two of Patanjali's yoga-sutra, moral guidelines and regimens for emotional well-being and spiritual growth are described before meditation practices are explained. A moral lifestyle, psychological well-being, and constructive, disciplined behaviors provide a firm foundation for productive living and proficient superconscious meditation practice.

Many people who are interested in yoga don't know that effective yoga practice requires the same right endeavor that is necessary to be successful in accomplishing mundane purposes.

If they don't think rationally, have undeveloped powers of discernment, or are not willing to be responsible for their mental and emotional states, behaviors, and the effects of actions, they are not yet ready for intensive (concentrated) yoga practice.

In some yoga (and other enlightenment) traditions, a guru or teacher won't accept students for instruction or training if they aren't capable of learning or of practicing what is taught. When Lahiri Mahasaya asked Babaji for permission to initiate people who had job and family duties, Babaji advised him to be sure that they were honest and sincere. Later, when Lahiri initiated someone, he told them, "Don't let anyone know that you practice these methods or that I am your guru." He wanted disciples to attend to their duties and privately practice meditation rather than talk about it. During the three decades after Lahiri was initiated by Babaji, he initiated approximately five thousand people. Most of his disciples were Hindus; some were Moslems, and a few were Christians. He said that Kriya Yoga—lifestyle regimens and meditation practices—was the inner way to Self-realization that could be used by all people regardless of their religious affiliation, or lack of one.

Among several of Lahiri Mahasaya's disciples whom he permitted to initiate was Paramahansa Yogananda's guru, Priya Nath Karar (he was given the monastic name Sri Yukteswar when he later became a swami). Master told me, and a few other disciples during an informal meeting, "Sri Yukteswar could have been one of the most sought after gurus in India if he had not been so strict. My first few months with him were very difficult, but I needed that training to balance my personality. On one occasion, when he reprimanded me, I told him, 'No matter how often you scold me, you will never be able to get rid of me.' "

Some of my guru's personality characteristics that needed to be changed when he was a young adult were impulsiveness, preoccupation with thoughts and moods, and inclinations to want to be detached from secular conditions. He had wanted to be a secluded yogi. Sri Yukteswar reminded him that his duty in his current incarnation was to make Kriya Yoga philosophical principles, lifestyle regimens, and meditation methods widely

available to the multitudes of truth seekers who were becoming interested in spirituality. When he was preparing to depart from India and come to America, in 1920, Sri Yukteswar told him to "teach the Kriya Yoga of Patanjali."

Among the thousands of people who attended my guru's lectures and were initiated, and hundreds who were accepted for personal discipleship training, only a few fervently aspired to be spiritually enlightened or adhered to their practices. He was pleased when people were constructively motivated and sometimes mildly disappointed when they weren't. Optimistic and enthusiastic, he said that because we were in an ascending phase of a 24,000 year cycle conditions would improve in the near and distant future. He was interested in the total well-being of everyone in our current era and those who would be in our world during future decades and centuries.

Sri Yukteswar described 24,000-year cycles with 12,000-year periods of ascending and descending phases. The ascending phases are 1,200 years during which 25 percent of intellectual capacities of most people are developed; 2,400 years during which 50 percent of intellectual capacities of most people develop; 3,600 years during which 75 percent of intellectual capacities of most people develop; and 4,800 years when the intellectual capacities of most people fully develop. According to his calculations we are 300 years into a 2,400-year ascending cycle, indicated by rapid progress in scientific discoveries and increasing interest in education and spirituality.

The following excerpt from an ancient collection of writings in India describes the periods of mutations or changes during the beginning and ending of phases: "It is said that four thousand years is the Golden Age of the world. Its morning twilight and evening dusk has as many hundreds."

100+1000+100=1200 Past Dark Era, 500 – 1700 CE
200+1000+200=2,400 Current Electrical Era, 1700 – 4100
300+3000+300=3,600 Future Mental Era, 4100 – 7799
400+4000+400=4,800 Future Enlightened Era, 7700 – 12,500

After the end of a complete ascending 12,000-year period, 12,000 years of descending phases begin, during which intellectual capacities of most people begin to diminish. Some knowledge acquired during the previous ascending phases is remembered and preserved by a few people. Mental characteristics and spiritual capacities of each phase are reflected in the general population of the planet. There are always some people who are very intelligent and spiritually conscious, some with undeveloped mental capacities and little or no spiritual awareness, and others at various stages of development.

I am frequently asked what we might be able to do to more fully awaken to Self-realizaton. My experience, and that of others whom I know had higher realizations, is that persistent, patient, adherence to wholesome lifestyle regimens and attentive meditation practice eventually unveils innate knowledge.

When it seems that spiritual awakening is too slow, it is a mistake to be depressed or lazy, lose interest in spiritual matters, or drift aimlessly for many years.

Before vivid realizations emerge, constantly remember, and affirm, that flawless knowledge of your true nature and of ultimate Reality and its expressive processes is within you.

Avoid thinking or feeling that you are not a pure-conscious unit of ultimate Reality. Revelations can occur at any moment, when you are meditating or are engaged in ordinary activities.

Cultivate the habit of being alertly attentive and constantly interested in accurately perceiving what you observe and desire to know. You will then live more effectively and enjoyably, metaphysical studies will be more meaningful, and meditation practice will be deeper and soul-satisfying.

Something Helpful to Do

From time to time, after an interlude of deep meditation, reaffirm your commitment to your spiritual path. Confirm your commitment by how you think and live.

Kriya Yoga Philosophy, Traditions, and Practices

How can inspiration be encouraged, allowed, or invited to flow?

It is natural to feel enlivened and empowered when we are cheerfully optimistic, keenly interested in learning about life's processes, and motivated to bring forth and express our innate qualities and functional capacities. Identify with *sattwic* (pure) influences by thinking and acting in ways which enhance your life, develop your mental abilities, expand awareness, and clarify consciousness. Constructively regulate *rajasic* (transformational) influences with purposeful behaviors and by avoiding restless or strongly stimulating activities and circumstances. Avoid *tamasic* (inertial) behaviors and relationships that dull the mind, blur awareness, and obstruct perceptions of your true nature and higher realities.

What is meant by "intensive" Kriya Yoga practice?

Intensive practice is *concentrated, right endeavor* that allows ideal results to be more easily and quickly experienced. Forceful or aggressive endeavor is not useful. Do only what is productive; avoid doing what is useless or harmful. The benefits of Kriya Yoga practice cannot be experienced if we are lazy or not attentive. To be able to practice intensively, we have to know what to do, how to do it, and be willing to do it.

Many Kriya initiates don't have soul-satisfying realizations because they are only superficially interested in spirituality, waste time and energy in useless activities and relationships, and are preoccupied with ordinary transitory events and circumstances. Some become more interested as they grow older or when they are troubled, ill, or experience disappointments. Although it is never too late to intensively practice Kriya Yoga, it is better to do it when we are enthusiastic and energetic. Heed the words that my guru spoke to me: "Read a little. Meditate more. Think of God all the time."

I have heard stories about people who say they have visited the Babaji in our guru lineage. Are their stories true?

Sanskrit *baba*, "father." The suffix *ji* may be added to indicate respect. In India, men who are respected because of their good character, profound knowledge, or spiritual consciousness are commonly referred to as Baba or Babaji.

In the early 1950s, at Self-Realization headquarters in Los Angeles, California, I was with brother disciples who gathered near our guru's car as he prepared to be driven to an appointment. After he was settled in the back seat, he left the door open and talked with us for a few minutes. During the conversation he said, "After I am gone, several people in India will claim to be our Babaji and some mediums in America will say that I talk through them. Don't believe such stories. They will not be true!"

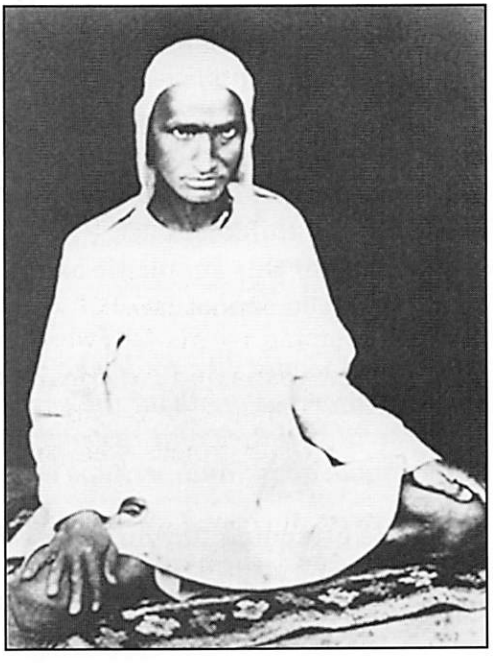
On one of my visits to India, in the 1990s, I met two people who said they had recently been with the Babaji in our lineage, in the Himalayas. Their stories, and descriptions of conversations, were simplistic. They may have met someone who was called Babaji, but they did not personally meet our Babaji.

From 1861 to 1924, in the foothills of the Himalayas, in the region of Hariakhan, a yogi with exceptional powers of perception and unusual abilities taught truth seekers and established several temples. Some individuals who now live in that region, whose parents or grandparents lived there in the early years of the last century, believe him to be the Babaji in our Kriya Yoga tradition. There are many stories and opinions, but no clearly defined evidence.

Starting in 1970, a young man in the Hariakhan region was falsely promoted by his followers as the Babaji in our lineage. Several Europeans and Americans who had visited his ashram told me that, when they were there, use of marijuana and other mind-altering substances was permitted. After some illnesses, he died in 1984.

Lahiri Mahasaya and Sri Yukteswar told disciples not to seek Babaji in the Himalayas; that it would be more beneficial for them to attend to their secular duties and improve their spiritual practices.

Swami Sri Yukteswar and Paramahansa Yogananda in Calcutta, India, 1935. *Far right:* Richard Wright, a disciple of Yogananda and brother of Faye Wright (Sister Dayamata).



Hariakhan Baba in Northern India, late 1880s and early 1900s. *See text on page 8.*

During the sixty years since Paramahansa Yogananda's passing, has he communicated with you or with anyone you know?

He has not directly communicated with me or with anyone I know. I have had several vivid dreams about him and have the same mental and spiritual attunement that I had with him when he was embodied. Although our personal interactions of many years ago were spiritually enlivening, he often said that mental and spiritual attunement was more important because it could continue and be supportive when personal interactions were not possible.

I am usually enthusiastic and highly motivated about having higher knowledge and my meditation practices. Now and then, when my enthusiasm wavers, I am not always interested in higher learning and meditating. What can I do to avoid those occasions or to more easily get past them when they occur?

It is easier and more enjoyable to adhere to constructive practices when we are constantly inspired. If we are not always inspired, a clearly defined, long-range view of what we want to accomplish, and firm resolve to do what we know we should do, can help us get through and move beyond temporary phases of lethargy, disinterest, or of having been distracted. Practice the discipline of Karma Yoga: compliantly adhere to regimens of right behaviors because it is right or proper to do so. Refuse to allow moods, whims, or physical or emotional impulses to influence how you think and act.

Remember this simplistic axiom: If you do what you must do to succeed, you cannot fail.

Although I would like to devote all of my time and resources to sharing information about the spiritual path with others, I have many secular duties and responsibilities. What can I do to help others know about and perhaps experience higher realities?

While attending to your duties and responsibilities, nurture your spiritual well-being. Your illumined consciousness will silently influence the collective consciousness of everyone in our

world. Provide others with helpful information and encouragement when it is possible to do it. Distribute, or recommend, inspirational literature to people who are receptive to learning about higher realities and how to nurture spiritual awareness. Financially support organized endeavors which serve others in constructive ways.

> That intellect is pure which accurately discerns what is to be done and what is to be avoided ... the causes of bondage, and the means of liberation.
> – *The Bhagavad Gita 18:30*

Can some people really materialize things or perform other so-called miracles?

A variety of such possibilities are described in chapter three of Patanjali's Yoga-Sutra:

36. Realization of one's true nature provides knowledge of the difference between it and ordinary states of consciousness.
37. From that superior realization, exceptional powers of perception and extraordinary abilities [may] result.
38. When used only [or excessively] for external purposes, they are obstacles to realizing higher samadhi. They should primarily be used to neutralize troublesome subliminal conditions and purify consciousness.

Events that may be considered to be miraculous are effects of natural causes that are not known by most people. Exceptional abilities can be used for constructive, life-enhancing purposes, just as we use any of our abilities. Where there is no ego-motivation, there is no possibility of behaving unwisely. Several years ago, I saw a man in India (who has since passed away) materialize small items in his hand. He said that he did it by imagining what he wanted to produce and willing it to manifest. Although he was a good person, others who have exceptional abilities and a pleasant personality may or may not be emotionally mature, ethical, and spiritually conscious.

I was initiated four years ago. How many kriya pranayamas should I now do each day?

Do as many as are comfortable for you. Instead of being too concerned about "how many," concentrate on "how" you do them. Paramahansa Yogananda emphasized depth of practice rather than high numbers. After pranayama practice, put your attention and awareness in the crown chakra; rest in the deep silence; contemplate (ponder and want to experience) pure consciousness. Kriya pranayamas enliven the chakras and help to internalize attention. Sitting in the "after-effects" condition of mental calmness and clarity of awareness provides opportunities to experience Self-knowing.

How important is it to know about and use the "higher" or more intricate kriya meditation techniques?

Unveiling and eliciting (bringing forth) superconsciousness can be accomplished by using the basic methods. The so-called higher techniques are variations of kriya pranayama and mental chanting of mantras at the chakras in the spine and brain. They are seldom taught because: 1) most kriya initiates are not proficient in using basic methods; 2) they are not necessary.

Regardless of how hard I try to experience spiritual growth, I do not seem to be making obvious progress. What can I do to allow spiritual growth to more easily occur?

First, intellectually understand that what is called spiritual growth is the emergence of innate awareness and knowledge of our essence of being, which is pure consciousness. It cannot be "caused" to emerge; it can be *allowed* to come forth. Acknowledge your pure essence rather than identify with an illusional or mistaken sense of self. Then use meditation and other spiritual practices to calm your mind and clarify your awareness.

A man obtained a small boat to move some personal possessions to another location. When it was loaded, to begin his journey, he manipulated the oars as he had seen others do. The boat did not move. Thinking that it might be overloaded, he removed

some items and again tried to row the boat, without success. He prayed for divine assistance, which was not forthcoming. He chanted a mantra, with no results. Finally, he asked someone for help. The person said, "Your problem is easily solved. Untie the rope that attaches your boat to the dock. Row out to where the water is deeper and let the currents carry you along. The rest of the journey to where you want to go will require very little personal effort."

The boatman's actions represent spiritual practices which are not productive until one's awareness (rope) attached to a mistaken sense of self (dock) is removed from it. To go to deeper water is to courageously proceed in the right way until flows (currents) of grace are constantly supportive. A steady course is maintained by being alert and acting wisely.

Does God and/or the gurus sometimes create personal problems or difficult situations to test our resolve and ability to live right or our commitment to our spiritual path?

Although considering problems and situations that have to be solved or overcome may motivate and empower us to use our creative abilities more skillfully, they are not created by God or anyone else for the purpose of testing our abilities or faith. Some emotionally immature religious people like to think that almost everything that happens to them occurs because God, a saint, or an angelic being control events that influence their everyday lives. By discovering the real causes of events we can appropriately respond to troublesome situations if they occur and know what to do to avoid similar situations in the future.

I heard a yoga teacher say, "Events that make you feel unhappy or cause pain are meant to teach you lessons or to help you understand what life is about." The truth: events are effects of causes; they can't *make* us unhappy, *cause* pain, or be *meant* or impelled by an external influence to do anything for us. We can choose to be mentally and emotionally disturbed by what is observed or experienced or be calmly insightful.

If it seems to us that spiritual awakening is slow, we can be patient (peacefully observant) while we learn to calm the mind

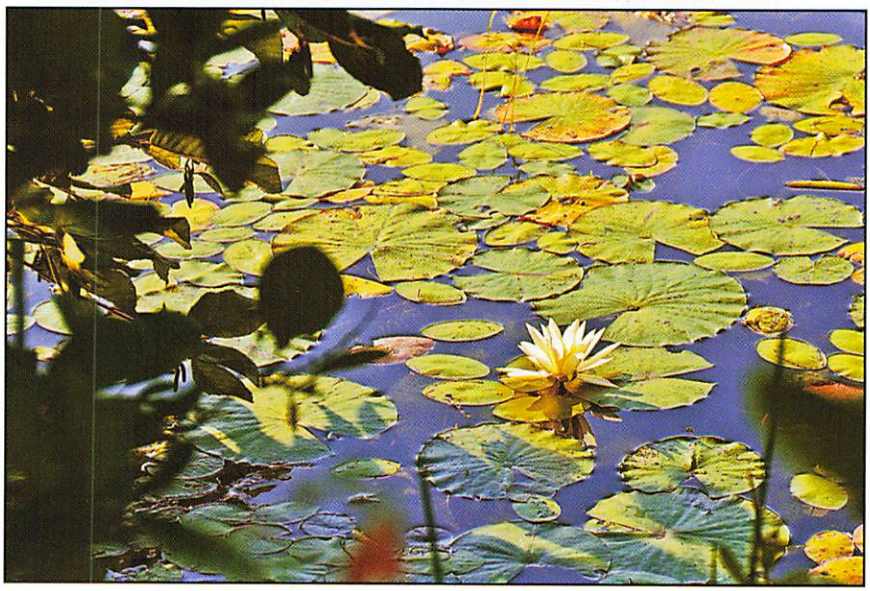
and be more conscious of our pure essence of being rather than identified with a small, confined sense of self.

If we are not yet as spiritually awake as we want to be, we can aspire to be more fully awake while improving our capacity to be superconsciousness. While being intent on our spiritual awakening path (a productive course of right actions), we can profoundly examine our essence of being and our relationship with ultimate Reality (as a unit of it), and what we might be able to do to be more fully Self- and God-realized.

Profound investigation of the facts of life and higher realities should continue even while we skillfully perform our duties and nurture our meaningful relationships.

Suffering which has not yet occurred should be avoided.
– *Patanjali's Yoga-Sutra 2:16*

Ultimate Reality that transcends space and time
is the true guru [teacher] of the ancient teachers.
– *Patanjali's Yoga-Sutra 1:26*



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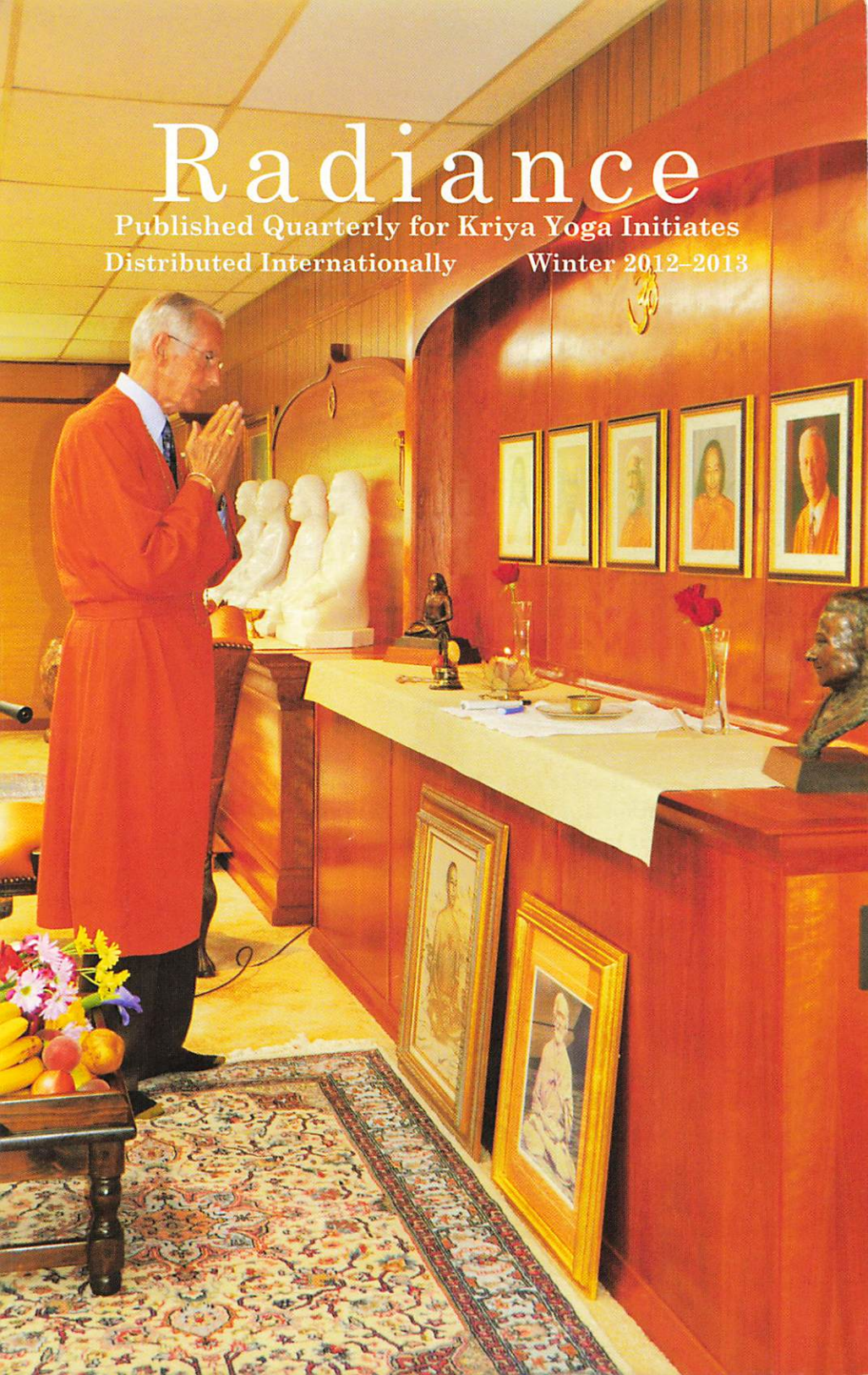


One who has put away the desires of the mind and is content
in Self-knowledge is said to be established in wisdom.
– *The Bhagavad Gita 2:55*

What a Spiritually Enlightened Guru (Teacher) May Do for Disciples (And What Disciples Should Do for Themselves)

During the summer of 1950, a few months after I met my guru, I went by bus from Phoenix, Arizona, to Twentynine Palms, California, to visit him at his private retreat. There, one late evening, I was invited to join a few disciples who had gathered with him near the driveway entrance. After he had talked for a few minutes, he pointed the beam of his flashlight at me, then very quietly said, "Roy, when you first arrived, I asked the others, 'Shall we keep him?' Do you know what they said?"

"No sir," I responded.

My guru continued, "They said, 'He was sick, and may get sick again.' I looked into your heart, and told them, 'He stays!' "

After a brief pause, as he turned the flashlight off, he said, "Good night, Roy." He then dismissed us.

* In 1949, from February to early July, because of having rheumatic fever, I was confined to bed. During that period of seclusion, I read an advertisement for *Autobiography of a Yogi* in a magazine and immediately ordered it by mail. While reading it, I knew that this Kriya Yoga path was for me and that Paramahansa Yogananda was my guru. I went to California in December of that year, and was permitted by him to stay at the Self-Realization Fellowship headquarters in Los Angeles until he arranged for me to go to the Phoenix SRF Center.

I went to my guru with desire and willingness to learn and to engage in intensive meditation practice. From the occasion of our first private talk to my last visit with him a few weeks before he left his body, he told me what to do to be spiritually enlightened and assured me that I could "go all the way" in one incarnation. At public gatherings and in private conversations, he often advised, "Don't go halfway, three-fourths of the way, or almost to the end, then quit. Go *all the way* while you have the opportunity

to do it!" Every time he said those words, I was inspired* and more highly motivated.

***inspire** (Latin *inspirare*: *in-*, into + *spirare*, to breath.) To guide, affect, or arouse by divine influence. To elevate with reverent emotion. To stimulate or motivate to creative or constructive action.

During the last two years of his earth life my guru was (as he privately said) "more absolute." Inclined to be more inward and less interested in ordinary matters, he reminded disciples to fervently aspire to be fully Self-realized as soon as possible. Because he knew he would soon withdraw from his body, he went to the desert where he could concentrate on important projects without being distracted by organization matters.

He made decisions regarding the ongoing of his mission and told the SRF board of directors and some close disciples how to spread the teachings after he was gone—which they have done. Many of the projects he outlined in the early 1950s have been completed and others will also come into manifestation in the near and distant future. He would say, "I have sown the seeds of my plans in the ethers." He was confident that they would eventually sprout and produce the desired results. He advised his disciples to also imagine ideal conditions, and learn how to produce and attract them. He frequently encouraged disciples by telling them that what he did, they could also do.

When I have read or heard stories told about Paramahansa Yogananda by some of his other disciples, I sometimes noticed a difference between their remembrance and what I heard him say and saw him do. People's perceptions and experiences vary. Also, my guru endeavored to relate and speak to others in ways that would be most helpful to them.

The most obvious influence that emanated from him was the aura of his Self-realized presence and his compassion. That he sincerely cared about the total well-being of everyone was evident to almost every person he spoke with or who saw him interact with others.

To individuals and at informal gatherings of disciples my guru said, "I go through your souls every day." By thinking of

us he could know our mental and emotional states and states of consciousness. He could silently provide spiritual upliftment. If personal advice was needed, he might talk with the disciple, write a note, or make a telephone call.

He told us to mentally and spiritually "broadcast" good will to everyone every day. He asked us to raise our arms, audibly chant Om for the health and total well-being of others, and imagine and "feel" spiritual forces flowing from our spiritual eye and hands into the universe.

Paramahansa Yogananda *Late 1940s*

In spite of the time and energy he devoted to helping disciples, and truth seekers from many walks of life who requested his guidance, only a few of them really understood what he told them or adhered to lifestyle regimens and meditation practices that he taught. Knowing that, for most people in the current ascending era spiritual awakening is slow, he continued to patiently encourage others to diligently endeavor to elicit their innate, divine qualities and knowledge of their true nature. A few were highly successful in doing so. A few are still endeavoring to do so. Many are still wandering aimlessly.

The Permanent Spiritual Value of Remembering the Ultimate Purpose of Kriya Yoga Practice

Kriya Yoga is practiced to remove all obstacles
to [realization of] samadhi.
– Patanjali's Yoga-Sutra 2:2

The basic Kriya Yoga practices are: constructive, regulated thinking and behaviors; profound Self-study; and rising above or letting go of illusional or mistaken ideas and feelings of self-identity. Profound (in-depth) Self-study includes learning from others, contemplative Self-inquiry to discover our essence; and meditation practice to have authentic experiences of our true nature and accurate perceptions of higher realities.

Samadhi (*sam*, to firmly bring or hold together) is realized when our attention and awareness are one with what was meditatively contemplated or with our pure essence of being. The first oneness is supported by what is perceived; the second kind is a direct (with nothing between) experience. The first oneness can be used to concentrate attention and calm the mind. The second kind purifies the mind, clarifies awareness, and illumines our consciousness. A samadhi of alert pure being and knowing can also occur when we are not meditating. That samadhi is not accomplished by any personal endeavor; it is effortless awareness of our essence which is always pure.

The devotee whose awareness is pure, with mental impulses
subdued and without cravings, is established in yoga [samadhi].
– The Bhagavad Gita 6:18

The one Reality is revealed within us when our
consciousness is purified by freeing it from all
ideas of duality and limitation.
– Lahiri Mahasaya (1828 – 1895)

Kriya Yoga Philosophy, Traditions & Practices

Readers are invited to send questions and inquiries which may be used in a future issue of this publication. Use the form that was enclosed with this issue or e-mail: **rd@csa-davis.org**

How can samadhi, our ultimate spiritual aim, be most quickly realized?

1. Using discriminative intelligence to know the difference between what we observe and us as the observer. 2. Frequent, alert practice of superconscious meditation to the stage of pure Self-realization.

Until Self-knowing is flawless, transitory subjective perceptions and erroneous ideas and opinions have to be renounced. Some mystics and yogis have been attached to mind-produced phenomena (visions of light, people, places, things), pleasant meditative perceptions (joyousness, ecstasy, serenity, enlarged states of consciousness) and false beliefs for many years. I have known people who were very devout and experienced profound states of meditation who believed in evil forces and had other foolish ideas.

Why do so few spiritual aspirants "go all the way" in one incarnation as Paramahansa Yogananda advised?

They don't fervently aspire to do it. If they sincerely wanted to do it, they would. They choose to identify with conditioned mental states, moods, behaviors, and people who think and act like them.

When we firmly decide to be spiritually awake, we have to learn what to do and how to do it, then do it. Although there is a possibility of being quickly spiritually enlightened, it is more usual for learning, doing, and Self-awakening to occur over a period of several years—an insignificant segment of time when compared with the permanent, liberating results that we will surely have.

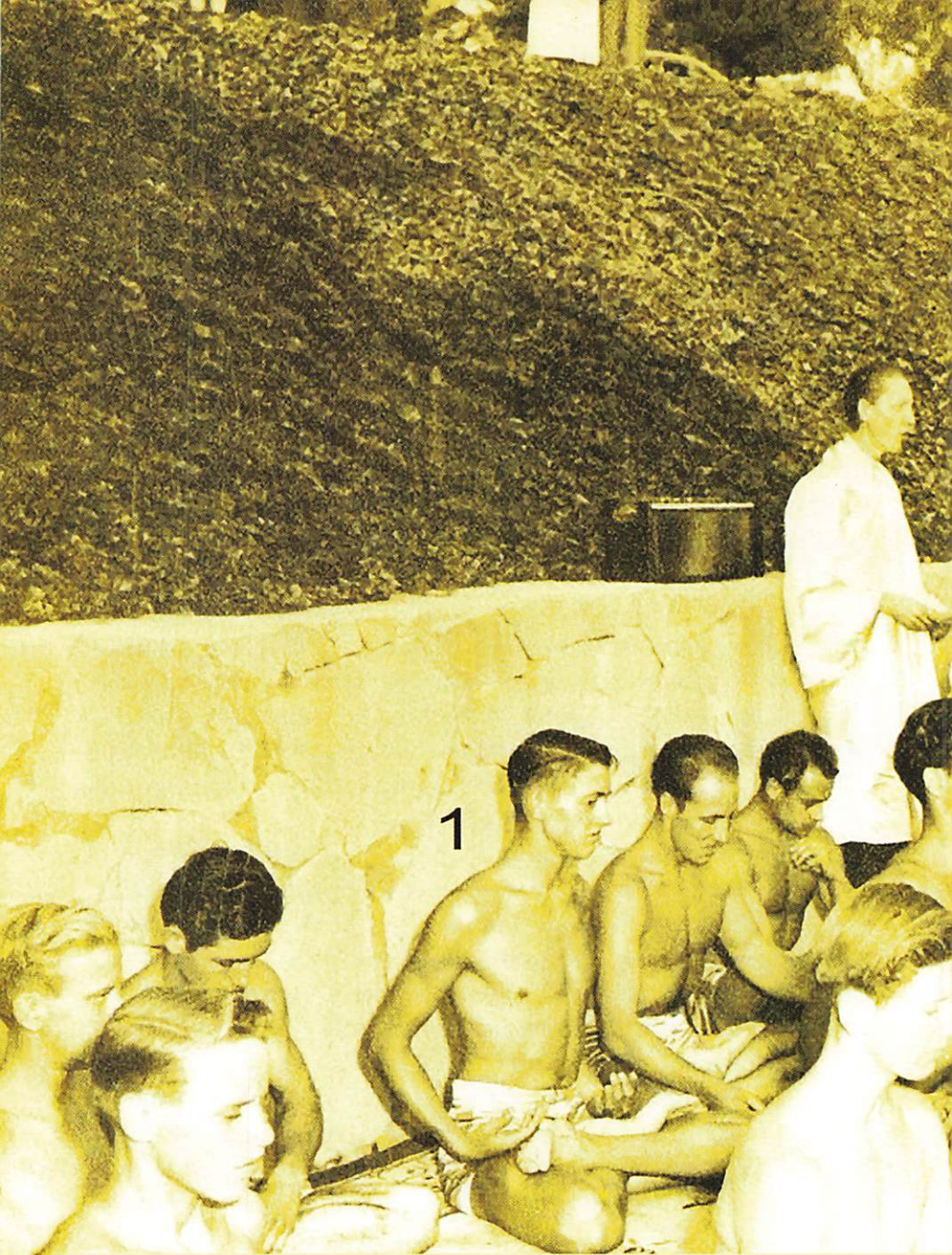
Did Paramahansa Yogananda have difficulties to contend with or overcome? What did he do about them?

In his *Autobiography of a Yogi*, he told of his need to control his impulsiveness when he was a child and how his guru Sri Yukteswar helped him learn to balance devotional ardor with Self-disciplined thinking and actions.

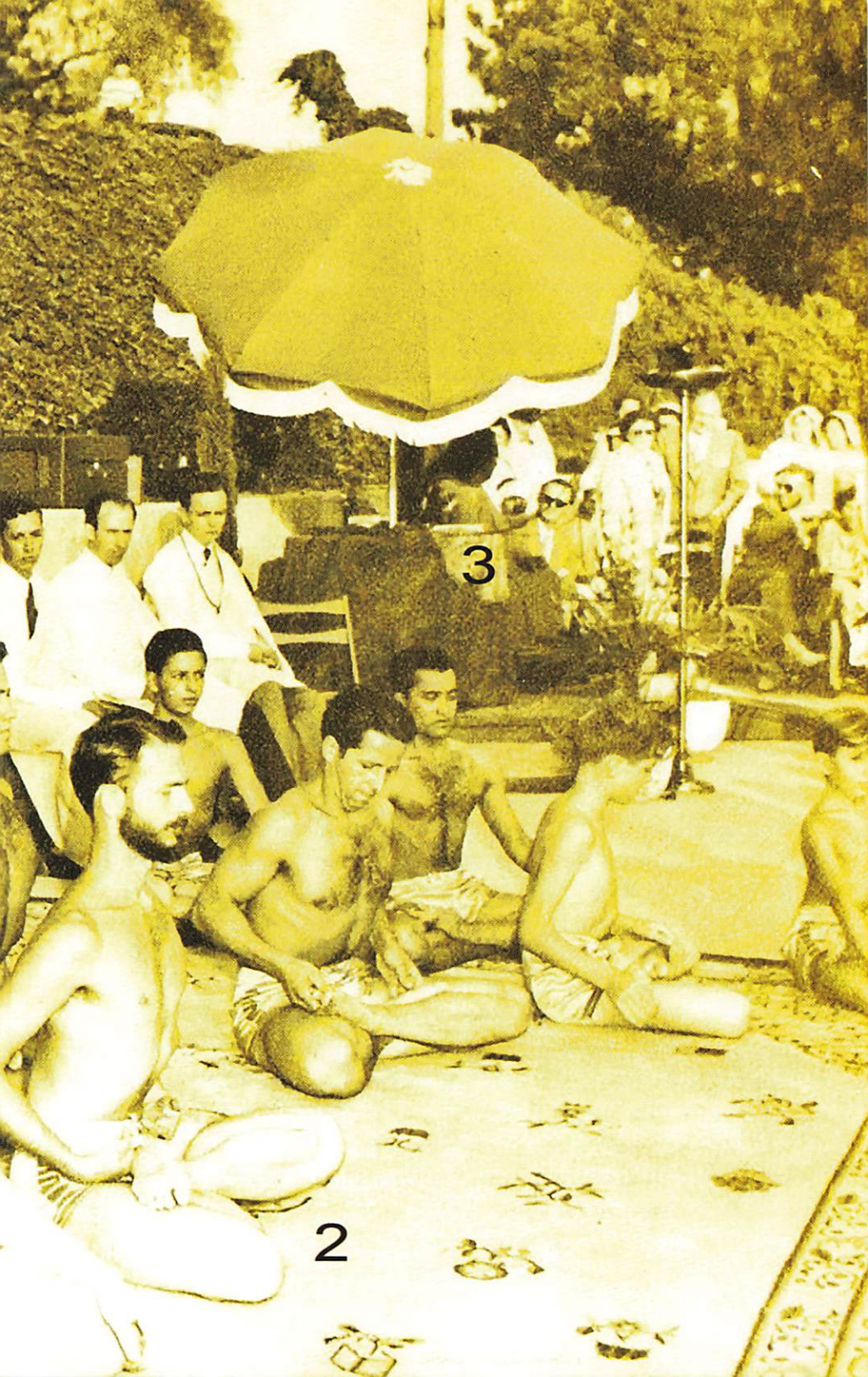
When he came to America he had to learn to communicate effectively in our culture, create and maintain an organization, attract and train disciples, and train and inspire teachers who could assist him in spreading his mission. Through the 1930s and 1940s, during the Great Depression, the Second World War, and the years that immediately followed, several dedicated disciples were initiated and lectures and classes were presented in Los Angeles and a few other cities. Funds that were needed to maintain the teaching centers and outreach projects were limited. Donations from members and a few dedicated disciples were very helpful. James Lynn was a regular financial supporter during those years and later, after Master passed, was able to donate approximately three million dollars to Self-Realization Fellowship. Since then, membership has vastly increased and flows of funds have greatly improved.

Master told me that one of his major challenges was that of attracting competent men and women who would be effective, loyal ministers and teachers. Several people who were trained by him soon became disinterested in spiritual matters, were egotistical, or started their own movements (which soon dissolved). Some of his brother disciples in India didn't understand his world mission and his heroic endeavors to reach and serve hundreds of thousands of devotees instead of being satisfied to attract a modest number of truth seekers. When he encouraged them to widely publicize and expand the services of the India branch of his organization, as he did in America, they sometimes resisted his advice.

My guru also wanted some disciples to be able to establish and be responsible for the leadership and growth of permanent branch centers in various regions of the United States and in other countries, but that did not happen during his earth-life.



Self-Realization Fellowship headquarters, 1950
1. Roy Eugene Davis 2. Donald Walters (Swami Kriyananda)
3. Paramahansa Yogananda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Of disciples whom he ordained and authorized to initiate, I am his only guru-successor. A few brother and sister disciples, who are in their eighth decade, as I am, initiate and counsel as representatives of our guru, not as teachers.

He continued to do what he knew he should do and didn't allow thoughts of failure or disappointment to poison his mind or weaken his resolve. He looked to the Source for resources and timely events, circumstances, and relationships that would come forth to assist him, and maintained a regular schedule of extended sessions of superconscious meditation and samadhi.

The October 15, 2012 edition of Newsweek magazine published an article titled "My Proof of Heaven" by a neurosurgeon. If you read the story, can you explain some of the events?

In the fall of 2008, the doctor was in a coma for seven days when the neocortex (said to control thought and emotions) of his brain was inactivated after he contracted a rare bacterial meningitis and E. Coli had penetrated his spinal fluid.

When his "adventure" started, he was in a place of "pink-white clouds" seen against a deep blue black sky. Seemingly advanced forms of beings moved across the sky, leaving long streaming lines behind them and seemed to be joyfully singing a huge, booming chant. During his "journey" a younger woman was with him as a guide. Millions of butterflies seemed to flow with and around them. He seemed to receive nonverbal impressions that he was loved and cherished, had nothing to fear, and there was nothing he could do wrong. He seemed to be aware of one, unified reality. His mentally asked questions were instantly answered as though by telepathy. He seemed to continue to move forward into "an immense void, completely dark, infinite in size, yet intimately comforting" and "brimming over with light" that came from a bright orb he sensed to be nearby. It seemed to him that he was being born into a larger world. Since having the experience he has become a "better" person, more interested in spirituality, and highly motivated to study the nature of consciousness.

Every few months, similar stories published in magazines and books attract a large following of readers. Many people are interested in knowing if their conscious existence will continue beyond the physical realm and what their perceptions and experiences might be.

The doctor's report indicates that he probably experienced a mixture of nonphysical states and mind-produced phenomena. While seeming to experience a considerable degree of freedom and cosmic awareness, he perceived some mental phenomena: colorful clouds and dark blue sky; flying beings which emitted streams of light; joyous singing; butterflies; a personal guide; and nonverbal, seemingly meaningful communications which inspired and reassured him.

Such experiences are sometimes described by meditators who calm their mind, internalize their attention, and detach their awareness from objective conditions and most subjective conditions. Subliminal impulses still keep the mind activated, causing the production of a variety of mental scenes and subtle sensations, some of which may be mistakenly thought to be astral events. A person who has been influenced by religious stories may think them to be heaven-like. A common effect of a profound subjective event, especially if it also has transcendent characteristics, is that one is inclined to be less self-centered and more interested in knowing about higher realities.

It is best to avoid talking too much about such experiences except with knowledgeable people who might be able to provide accurate information. Regular superconscious meditation that clarifies awareness will unveil Self-knowledge and knowledge of higher realities.

I am troubled about the suffering that many people experience. Why does it exist? How can we do away with it?

For as long as the universe continues to exist, some people and creatures will have difficulties and discomfort. Individuals can learn to have harmony and good fortune most of the time by having an optimistic mental attitude and living skillfully. The troubles people have are not always produced or attracted

by their thoughts or actions but may be related to their states of consciousness. The more spiritually aware they are, and the more they live in harmony with nature's laws and with others, the more likely they are to enjoy trouble-free existence.

When conditions are not ideal, be inwardly peaceful while expecting them to improve and implementing constructive actions if you can. Millions of people are experiencing extreme pain, hunger, illness, and limitations. Pray for their total well-being and nurture your own spiritual growth, physical and psychological health, and prosperity. Don't allow yourself to be sad or depressed by what you see in this world. Do your best to live freely and inspire others to also live freely.

Is it necessary to endeavor to try to arouse kundalini energies?

Kundalini energies or soul forces are naturally aroused by spiritual aspiration, holistic living, superconscious meditation, and associating with spiritually enlightened people.

Regular practice of kriya pranayama and the supplemental meditation techniques are the most effective ways to experience natural flows of life force upwards through the astral channel in the spine and into the higher brain.

After using any of the kriya meditation techniques, keep your attention and awareness in the higher brain, somewhat merge in Om, then aspire to go beyond Om to experience pure consciousness. The final stage is *kaivalya* (isolation), complete detachment from mundane conditions: liberation because "the purity of meditative awareness is equal to the purity of one's essence of being [true Self-nature]." *See Yoga-Sutra 3:56.*

During preliminary stages of spiritual awakening, one may seem to apprehend the existence of a larger or superior Reality and have a sense of communion with it. When we seem to be observing or experiencing a greater something external to us, we are still confined to a mistaken sense of self-identity. When that error in Self-perception is corrected, boundaries cease to exist. Only absolute existence-being prevails.

I grew up in a lower middle class environment. We didn't have very much money. I graduated from high school and worked for a while in a small factory. In my late twenties I learned about yoga and other spiritual practices and started to meditate. Will my early unexceptional experiences interfere with my spiritual growth?

Your personal history can only interfere with your spiritual growth if you allow thoughts or feelings of inadequacy or being limited to confine your awareness and inhibit your actions. Acquire all the knowledge that you may need and improve your ability to live effectively. As an immortal spiritual being, you have the same potential to be spiritually enlightened as all souls have. If you need to renounce or outgrow some restrictive mental attitudes and behaviors, you can do it.

My husband and I have two young children and we both have jobs. We are endeavoring to integrate our spiritual practices, lifestyle routines, family activities, and work. Is there anything else we should be doing?

Spiritual awakening to the final stages of illumination of consciousness is constantly nurtured by harmoniously blending all components of everyday life as you are doing. Even though when you meditate you aspire to realize pure consciousness, at other times endeavor to be fully alert while skillfully working, performing duties, and supportively relating to others. Natural spiritual growth will effortlessly progress. Regardless of what you are doing, affirm until you always know:

The radiant purity of my essence of being continuously illumines my mind and consciousness and benefits everyone and all forms of life.

To aspire to be Self-realized is not a selfish intention. When we are more spiritually conscious and healthy-minded, planetary consciousness is more illumined and environmental conditions can be more harmonious.

What does it mean to practice Kriya Yoga intensively?

The word *intensive* means "emphasis" or "concentration." To emphasize Kriya Yoga practice is to acknowledge its value or importance. Our Kriya Yoga practice is concentrated when we do what is most useful or necessary while reducing or ignoring what is not useful or necessary. With our spiritual practices, as with mundane projects, skillfully applied *intensive* actions can produce or allow us to have faster results.

Is spiritual growth the result of our effective actions, grace, or both our effective actions and of grace?

Effective right actions (kriyas) and grace (unearned, freely provided supportive influences) are both needed. We need to do what we have the capacity to do to be receptive to grace, and grace will often do for us what we cannot do.

Impulses of grace arise from within us and the omnipresent field of the expressive aspect of ultimate Reality in which we exist. Grace empowers and nurtures our evolution (growth and development) and the evolution of living things.

Kriya Yoga practice quickens our spiritual growth by:

- Calming the mind and the subliminal influences that cause mental and emotional unrest.
- Removing psychological conflicts.
- Refining our nervous system and developing the capacities of our brain to process refined states of consciousness.
- Allowing our soul forces to flow more easily.
- Resisting, weakening, and neutralizing troublesome subconscious conditionings.
- Clarifying our awareness.

As often as may be necessary, renew your resolve to *intensively* practice Kriya Yoga until you are spiritually enlightened. Each time you do what you know you should do for your total well-being, you become stronger and more emotionally mature.

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Offices and Retreat Center on CSA Lane off Lake Rabun Road, Lakemont.
Tel: 706-782-4723 weekdays 8 a.m. – 3 p.m. Fax: 706-782-4560
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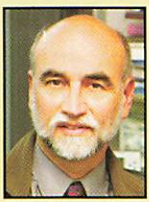
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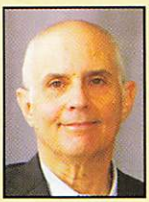
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Ellen Grace O'Brian

Radiance

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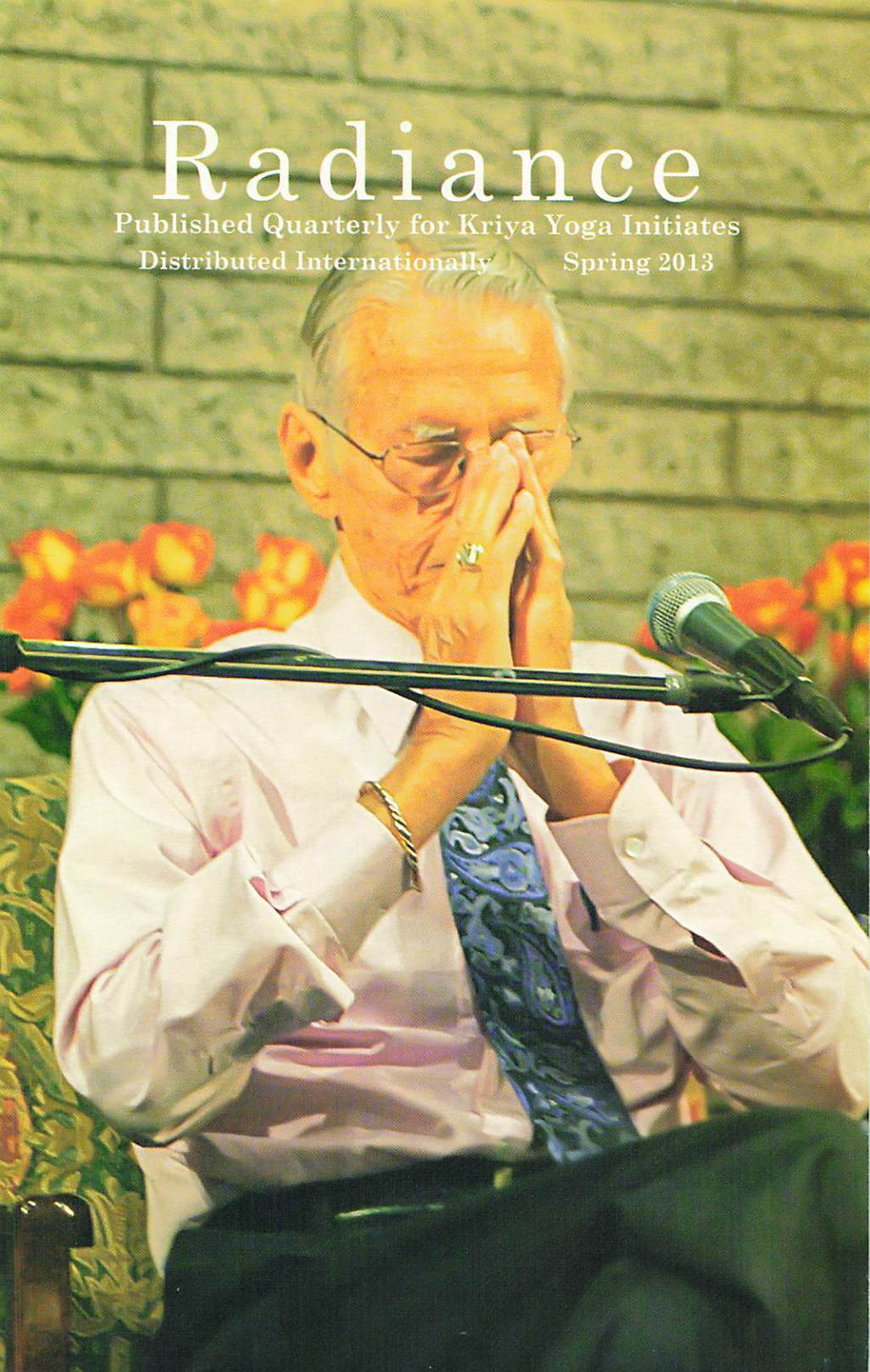

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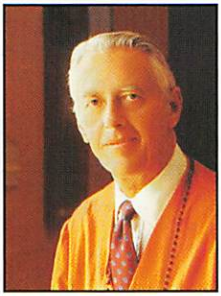
All Are Welcome **Donation at Kriya Initiation**



Roy Eugene Davis

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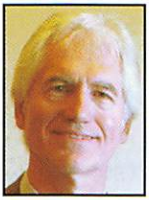

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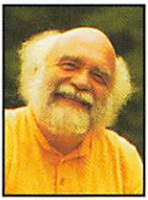


Swami Nirvanananda

I am sending light into your body! I am giving you everything!
It is up to you to receive it!
I heard Paramahansa Yogananda say that when he blessed people at the first Kriya Yoga initiation service I attended at Self-Realization Fellowship headquarters in August 1950.

PART TWO
What A Spiritually Enlightened Guru (Teacher) May Do for Disciples
(And What Disciples Should Do For Themselves)

When a disciple is receptive, a guru's kundalini energy (*shakti*) can arouse the disciple's soul forces. A disciple should nurture newly aroused soul forces by cultivating mental and emotional calmness, fervent aspiration to be fully spiritually enlightened, and regular meditation practice. Psychological transformation can then more easily occur and innate divine qualities can be unveiled and allowed to emerge.

One should not talk about inner experiences with anyone except their guru or a competent mentor, nor be anxious about the eventual results of changes that occur. A holistic lifestyle should be maintained. Accurate information about spirituality and higher realities should be acquired from reliable sources. Complete awakening to Self-realization can occur quickly, but is more likely to emerge over a period of several years during which one can learn to grow to emotional maturity and to skillfully blend realizations with everyday activities and personal relationships. Most newly awakened devotees have to learn to be patient while their nervous system is refined, their brain capacities are developed enough to process clear states of consciousness, and their intellectual and intuitive powers improve.

It can be helpful to fervently aspire to be soon Self-realized, have constructive short and long-term purposes and skillfully endeavor to accomplish them, profoundly study metaphysical (higher) realities, and daily superconsciously meditate. Our good intentions should be demonstrated by practical actions that produce and attract ideal results.

Some people who were directly assisted by a guru or had a spontaneous spiritual awakening don't have long-term benefits because they:

- Continue to think, feel, and live in ordinary ways—perhaps hoping be Self-realized without having to change restrictive mental attitudes; act constructively; clarify and expand their awareness; and renounce, see beyond, or rise above their mistaken sense of self-identity.
- Don't yet have the intellectual ability to comprehend simple information or to make wise choices regarding how to think, live, and nurture their spiritual growth.
- Are egocentric and mentally perverse: have an inflated sense of self-importance and inclined to distort useful information to serve their self-centered purposes.
- Are emotionally immature or have psychological problems which they should endeavor to have resolved.
- Are easily distracted or confused by objective circumstances and events or subjective (mental and emotional) conditions.
- Are only superficially interested in spirituality and inclined to waste time, energies, and resources in unproductive activities and useless relationships.
- Lose interest in spiritual matters.

Most of the above conditions can be avoided or corrected by sincerely wanting to be Self- and God-realized. It is then natural to be constantly inspired and highly motivated to learn what is necessary to learn, live effectively, and do what allows innate Self- and God-knowledge to emerge. Having the will to have our worthy purposes accomplished empowers us to create or attract the circumstances, relationships, or events that are needed to make it possible. By helping ourselves and expecting the universe to provide what we cannot provide, we can discover how mental and spiritual laws of cause and effect operate and our intimate relationship with the processes of nature, cosmic mind, and the omnipresent, expressive aspect of ultimate Reality.

If We are Not Yet Aware of Our True Nature and Relationship With the Infinite, We Only Need to Learn How to Know and Experience It

Kriya Yoga is practiced to remove all obstacles to samadhi.
– Patanjali's Yoga-Sutra 2:2

Transcendent *samadhi*, unification of attention and awareness with our pure essence of being, can allow effortless realization of our true nature. Preliminary samadhi can be experienced when attention and awareness identify with objects of meditative contemplation: subjective visual perceptions, emotions or other feelings, subtle sounds, mental concepts, or whatever else was contemplated prior to the temporary experience of identification with it. Ultimate—the furthest extent of awakening or so-called *highest* samadhi—is pure, changeless Self-realization when one is detached from external and subjective conditions and when thinking, talking, engaged in activity, relating to others and the environment, and experiencing emotions.

We may be so intent on endeavoring to experience samadhi by quieting the mind and focusing attention during meditative contemplation that we forget that Self-realization can also be actualized by using powers of discriminative intelligence to discern, know, and experience our true nature.

An obvious obstacle to samadhi and direct discernment of our true nature is the acquired habit of thinking and feeling that it is normal for our awareness to be confined and blurred by thoughts, moods, and personality characteristics—that we are limited human beings hoping or trying to become spiritual beings. This problem can be solved by acknowledging that we are spiritual beings. Constructive mental attitude adjustment, intellectual discernment, and intuitive insights can enable us to be Self-knowing.

Intellectual discernment (Jnana, pronounced *gyana*, Yoga) and introspective meditation should both be used to clarify awareness and unveil our innate, divine qualities and pure knowledge of our essence and of ultimate Reality.

Many people who say they are sincere *truth seekers* either

don't really believe they are spiritual beings or are so lacking in will power or an ability to concentrate that they allow their thoughts, feelings, and behaviors to be influenced by habits or external circumstances instead of being Self-determined with conscious intention.

From time to time, some people who see our web site or our publications contact me by e-mail or telephone to ask how they might become more spiritually aware, solve personal problems, be self-confident, or heal an illness. When I recommend daily meditation, a well-ordered lifestyle, constructive thinking, and other helpful procedures, they sometimes react as though they didn't hear what I said.

Some CSA members, kriya initiates, and/or others who have been at my seminars and read my books, don't meditate every day—or stay alert and attentive when they do meditate.

How Much Time Remains in Your Current Incarnation? What Are You Doing to Be Spiritually Enlightened?

Quietly think about how you have been living your life. Are you satisfied with what you have done—or are doing?

What can, and will, you do to enhance your total well-being and improve your personal circumstances?

What can, and will, you do to more attentively nurture your spiritual growth?

Write what you will immediately do to have your aims and purposes actualized.

Proceed with confident, firm resolve.

Affirm and Realize

I am one with ultimate Reality.
What is true of it is true of me.
Its radiance pervades my being and illumines my mind.
Its omniscience enlightens my consciousness.
Its omnipresence supports me.
Its omnipotence provides for me.

Kriya Yoga Philosophy, Traditions & Practices

Readers are invited to send questions and inquiries which may be used in a future issue of this publication. Use the form that was enclosed with this issue or e-mail: **rd@csa-davis.org**

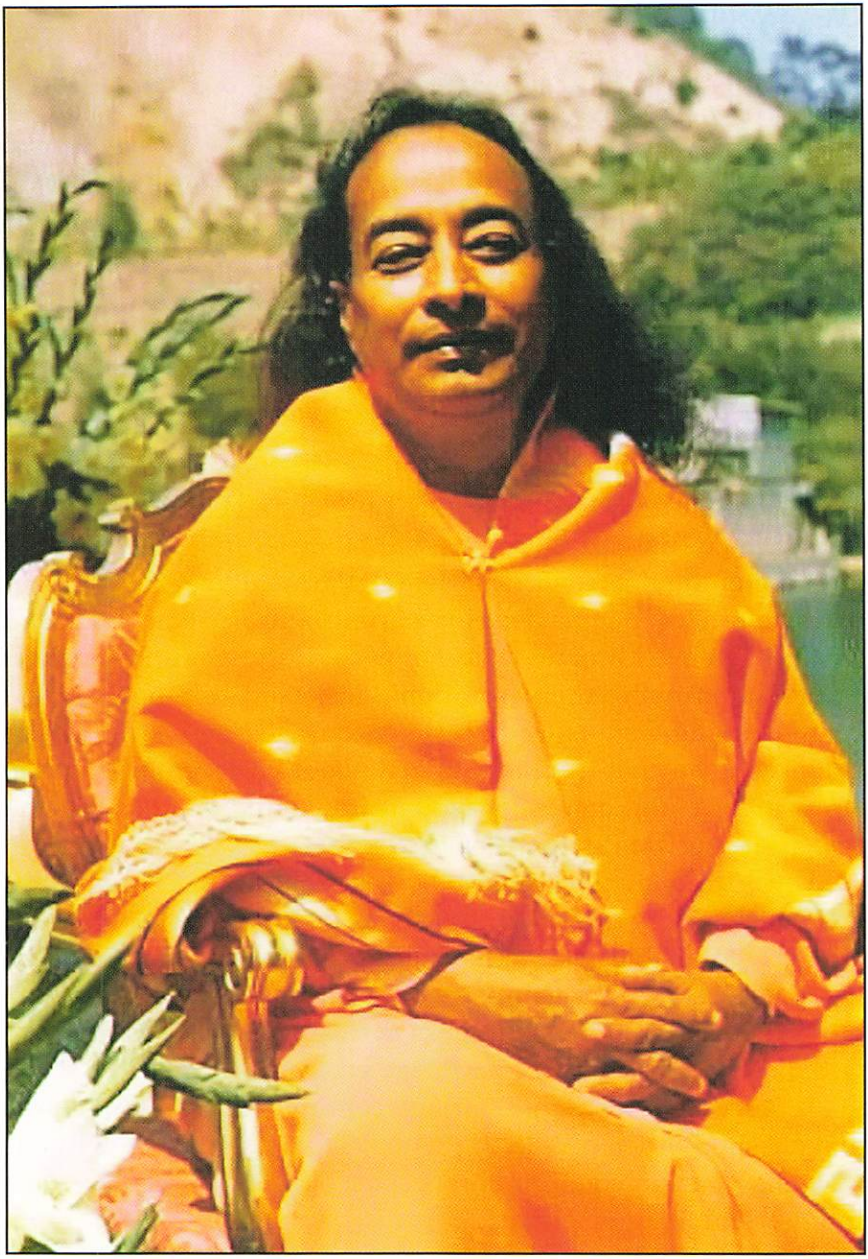
God as the ultimate Reality with a transcendent essence and an expressive aspect is not always easy for me to imagine. Your guru often wrote (and spoke) about God as a personal, loving, caring being—which is more appealing to me. Is it really necessary to comprehend God as a formless or transcendent Reality in order to be Self-realized?

I speak of ultimate Reality as I understand and experience it, and hope that truth seekers will be motivated to have their own understanding and experience. Paramahansa Yogananda often portrayed God as a caring parent-figure or beloved friend when talking with or writing for people who were devotional, wanted to preserve their traditional ideas, or were not yet able to understand God as God is. He encouraged me to rise above traditional ways of thinking; talked about God's omnipresence, omnipotence, and omniscience; and frequently emphasized the importance of liberation of consciousness.

Until ultimate Reality is fully realized, it can be helpful to think about, pray to, talk with, or endeavor to relate to a concept of God that enables you to have an awareness or sense of communication with a form or aspect of ultimate Reality. When our mind is very calm and awareness is clear, imagined concepts of God dissolve; innate Self-knowledge emerges.

Intellectually examine various concepts of God—your own and those of other people. Be as objective as possible without allowing your personal preferences or beliefs to influence your intellect, mind, or emotions.

While meditating, when you think about God, contemplate omnipresence; imagine that you are expanding until you are as large as the universe. Then contemplate *the changeless Reality* which produced and maintains the universe.



Paramahansa Yogananda
Self-Realization Fellowship Lake Shrine,
Pacific Palisades, California. *August 1950*

Does everyone who is initiated into Kriya Yoga meditation practices become a disciple of the person who initiates them? Why do representatives of some Kriya Yoga organizations tell initiates to acknowledge Paramahansa Yogananda as their guru even though he left this world more than sixty years ago?

Kriya teachers or representatives sometimes teach meditation methods without initiating or initiate without asking a person to be their disciple or student. Self-Realization Fellowship publishes a policy statement declaring Paramahansa Yogananda to have been the last in the line of *SRF* gurus—that they will not have anyone else as a guru (teacher) at the head of their organization. Their members are told to accept Paramahansa Yogananda as their guru, to pray to him and expect to receive guidance, just as Christians are told to accept Jesus as their guide and savior. The resulting problem is that people then only have an imagined contact which is not real. It is possible for some people to study, learn, meditate, and awaken to Self-realization without teachers. If competent teachers are not available, it is best to avoid involvements with incompetent ones.

My guru privately acknowledged that some of his disciples also had disciples. He told me to teach and initiate as he did. Lineages of gurus descended from Lahiri Mahasaya and Sri Yukteswar continue to flourish in India without any formal affiliation with institutions.

I recently read that an estimated twenty million people in the United States practice some form of yoga and a larger number of people practice meditation. Will interest in yoga and meditation continue to increase?

Interest in self-improvement and spirituality will definitely increase in the U.S. and in other countries because more people are choosing to be responsible for their well-being as their intellectual powers improve. Most yoga practitioners and meditators in our current era are primarily interested in physical, mental, and emotional health rather than awakening to Self- and God-realization.

I was initiated five years ago and have endeavored to nurture my spiritual growth. I still have difficulty controlling emotions and behaviors and am not always able to be peaceful, alert, and focused when I meditate.

Learn to control what you think about, what you say and how you say it, moods and emotions, behaviors, and reactions or responses to events and situations. Endeavor to always be calm, cheerful, and optimistic, and to harmoniously blend all aspects of your life. Think rationally and continue to improve your intellectual and intuitive powers. Avoid compulsive and impulsive behaviors. Replace nonuseful or harmful mental attitudes and personal behaviors with constructive attitudes and behaviors. It will then be easier to be peaceful, mentally calm, and attentive when you meditate.

When meditating, sit quietly until you are superconscious. That superior state of consciousness will purify the conscious and subconscious levels of your mind, clarify your awareness, refine your nervous system, and develop the parts of the brain that process refined states of consciousness.

You will know that you are growing spiritually when you are almost always mentally and emotionally peaceful, aware of being a unit of a Larger Reality, enjoy interludes of seclusion, and are mentally and spiritually renewed by silence.

I never found the companion who was
as companionable as solitude.
– Henry David Thoreau (1817 – 1862)

Do kriya initiates and proficient meditators have personal problems and physical ailments that many people who are not on a spiritual path have?

Until spiritual aspirants are highly Self-realized, they may have to contend with problems that are commonly experienced by most people: needs or desires to have supportive personal or social relationships, personality conflicts, unreliable economic conditions, or thoughts or feelings of insecurity or uncertainty about what choices to make or what to do. There may also be

a need or desire to dissolve or see beyond what seems to be a gap or distance between one's limited state of consciousness and pure Self-knowledge without limitations.

Several men and women on a spiritual path whom I have known, or have known about, had some debilitating personal problems from time to time: a need for minor or major surgery, heart or respiratory difficulties, brain tumors, cancer, arthritis, physical pain or emotional trauma, or in later years diminished ability to see, hear, or remember.

We may like to think and believe (as I do) that being more spiritually conscious will enable us to avoid—or easily solve—troubles that are sometimes experienced by people who are not yet spiritually conscious. Sincere desire and endeavor to be spiritually conscious contributes to improved psychological and physical well-being. Of greater value is to actually experience authentic spiritual growth that enables us to be impervious to troublesome influences and to produce or attract ideal personal circumstances.

I meditate regularly and enjoy the deep, peaceful silence that is now easy to experience. I don't have vivid perceptions of light, pronounced feelings of ecstasy, unusual insights, or occasions of transcendence. My abilities to live freely and understanding of my true nature and higher realities have steadily improved.

You are experiencing natural spiritual growth (emergence of innate qualities and knowledge) that will continue to occur. Meditative perceptions and experiences other than Self- and God-realization do not endure because they are products of the mind, prana (life force), or other subjective influences.

After a meditation technique or form of practice—prayer, affirmation, mantra, or pranayama—has been used to calm the mind and focus concentration, be aware in the higher brain (also the front of the brain if inclined to do so), stay very still, and endeavor to be aware of your pure essence of being.

Occasionally experiment by detaching attention from the peaceful silence to provide opportunities to have useful insights and experiences of transcendence.

Does spiritual enlightenment immediately result in liberation of consciousness? Some people that I have read about who were (or are) considered to be spiritually enlightened have said things I don't think are true or have behaved unkindly or improperly.

Purification of consciousness to the extent that all false beliefs and karma (troublesome subconscious influences) are banished can be immediate or may occur slowly or quickly in accord with whether spiritual enlightenment is partial or complete.

A person may have intuitive insights, preliminary samadhi experiences, and occasions of partial Self-knowing while allowing harmful or inappropriate habits of thinking and behaving to be influential. Or during early periods of Self-realization, psychological transformation may not yet be complete.

A person whose spiritual enlightenment is complete cannot be mean, narrow minded, dishonest, immoral, or selfish.

When the purity of one's essence of being, mind, intellect, and awareness are the same, absolute Self-knowledge prevails.
Patanjali's Yoga-Sutra 3:56

The statements "karma must be worked out" and "a skillful guru resolved a disciple's karma" are in some yogic teachings. Is there a way to target and resolve karma?

Karmic conditions may *cause* effects. Many of our thoughts, words, actions, or subconscious conditionings don't cause obvious effects. Words or actions that inspire or motivate us, or inspire or motivate others or elicit a reaction from them, may produce weak, mild, or strong effects.

Physical and psychological effects of negative thinking, poor nutrition, alcoholism, unwise drug use, sleep deprivation, debilitating environmental conditions, physical or emotional trauma or other harmful conditions can often be overcome. Our former actions cannot be changed. The constructive things we choose to do now—and continue to do— can be transformative.

- Subjective (of the mind and emotions) causative influences can often be weakened and neutralized.

- Negative thoughts and feelings can be replaced with constructive thoughts and feelings.
- Harmful habits can be replaced with life-enhancing habits.
- False beliefs can be discarded.
- Habitual thoughts and feelings of grief, fear, anxiety, loneliness, unworthiness, incompetence, and all other debilitating thoughts and feelings can and should be replaced with constructive thoughts and feelings.
- Apathy can be replaced with inspired intention to skillfully accomplish purposes of value to oneself and others.
- Impulsiveness can be avoided by choosing to calmly make wise choices.
- Addictive cravings and behaviors can be replaced with Self-reliance and mastery of states of consciousness, mental attitudes, emotions, and senses.
- A poverty consciousness can be replaced with a prosperity consciousness.

Paramahansa Yogananda said that his guru, Sri Yukteswar, advised disciples to avoid indulging in feelings of regret about past unwise actions. He declared that everything in the future would definitely improve when right endeavors were immediately implemented and continued.

Regular superconscious meditation practice and learning to always be superconscious will resist, weaken, and neutralize troublesome subconscious conditions and improve powers of intelligence, intuition, and ability to make wise choices.

A spiritually enlightened guru's personal guidance can be helpful, as can the influences of their good will, transmission of spiritual energies, and purity of their consciousness when we are mentally and spiritually attuned to it.

> One who is devoted to yoga [samadhi] practice, whose awareness is clarified, whose essence is tranquil, whose senses are controlled, and who is cosmic conscious, is not unduly influenced by objective or subjective conditions.
> – *Bhagavad Gita 5:7*

CSA Ministers at Our Summer Meditation Retreats

Roy Eugene Davis will teach philosophical principles, lifestyle regimens, and meditation practices at the 10 a.m. sessions and conduct Kriya Yoga initiation Thursdays at 1 p.m. Some of the afternoon and evening sessions to be presented by visiting CSA ministers.

JUNE 10 - 14

Michael Getch Asheville, North Carolina
How to Use Meditation Techniques Effectively
Tim O'Brien Tallahassee, Florida
Everyday Life as Spiritual Practice: Cultivating Continuous Spiritual Awareness

JULY 1 –5

Philip McLemore Salt Lake City, Utah
The Wisdom Teachings of the Bhagavad Gita
Ron Lindahn CSA, Lakemont, Georgia
Awakening Through the Yoga Sutras

AUGUST 12 – 16

Katherine Geddes Stuart, Florida
Replacing Non-Useful Inclinations and Habits With Constructive Behaviors
Ellen Grace O'Brien Center for Spiritual Enlightenment, San Jose, California. The Path of Discipleship

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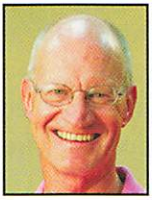
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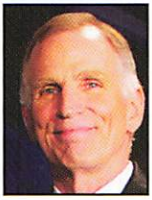
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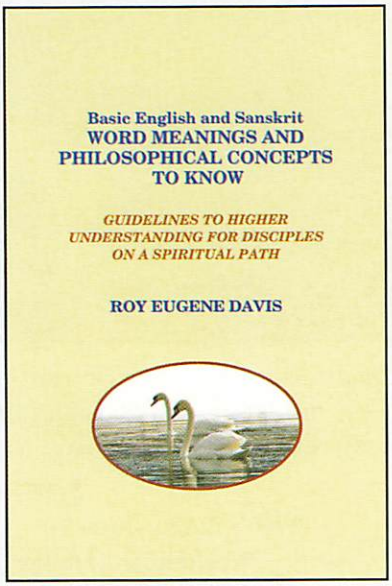
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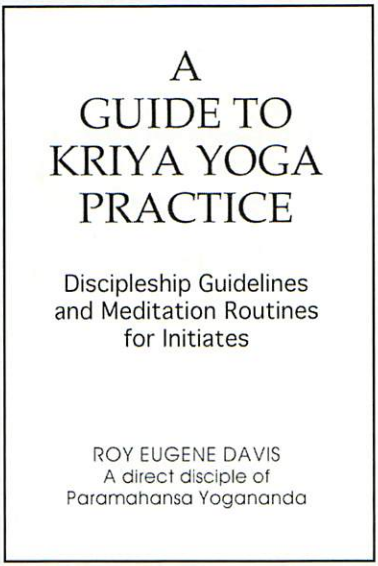

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Distributed Internationally
Summer 2013

Publicity poster used for Roy Eugene Davis' eight-city lecture tour in Japan, *1978*.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

1. As a kriya initiate your first duty is to sincerely endeavor to effectively integrate spiritual practices with everyday duties and activities. Constantly have Self-realization that culminates in liberation of consciousness in your current incarnation as your most important aim.

2. Support Center for Spiritual Awareness with regular donations to maintain our headquarters retreat center and fund our national and international ministry services.
EXCEPTION: If you are a member of another organization that represents our Kriya Yoga tradition, support it financially and in other useful ways. Donate $20 to CSA once a year to cover costs of printing and mailing of *Radiance* and *Truth Journal*.

3. If you do not read our literature or no longer want to receive it, let us know. Also inform us of any change of your mailing address as soon as you know it.

Kriya Yoga practice is a fast way to spiritual fulfillment.
– Paramahansa Yogananda

How Effective Practice of Kriya Pranayama Can Liberate Consciousness

prana Sanskrit verb root *an* = "to breathe" and *pra* = "forth." Vital or "life" force that animates a physical body and mind.
pranayama Pran(a) and *ayama* = "extended." *Pranayama* has often been mistakenly defined as breath control. The purpose of regulated breathing is to harmonize flows of prana.

Some obstacles to samadhi are doubt, negligence [of right living and spiritual practices], lack of spiritual growth, instability, addictions and attachments, faulty perceptions, and distracted attention. Some symptoms of distracted attention are anxiety, frustration, mental and physical restlessness, and irregular breathing. To overcome these obstacles, one can meditate on a chosen object or ideal. All such obstacles may definitely be overcome by effective practice of pranayama.
– Patanjali's Yoga-Sutra 1:30 – 32 & 34

When practicing kriya pranayama, inhalation, exhalation, and natural phases of stillness after exhalation are extended as breathing becomes internalized and movements of prana in *sushumna nadi* (the channel through which prana moves in the astral spine) become calmly harmonized.

In some older Yoga texts, *kriya pranayama* that is taught in our Kriya Yoga tradition is called *kevali pranayama* because effective practice results in *kevala:* still or motionless oneness (in which thoughts are absent and higher knowledge can be revealed or accessed). Although breathing may be slow and shallow and occasions of stillness between inhalations may be longer, breathing does not really stop, nor does the heart stop.

When our life forces are agitated, we are inclined to be restless and our mind and emotions are unsettled. Even when we are superficially poised, at deeper levels we may not always be completely peaceful or able to concentrate when we sit to meditate. Regular, effective practice of kriya pranayama is one way

of harmonizing and calming flows of prana that result in mental and emotional calmness, focused concentration, and *samadhi* (firm unification of attention and awareness) with an object of meditative contemplation, with one's pure essence of being, or an aspect or the pure essence of ultimate Reality.

When practicing kriya pranayama, it is important to stay alert and attentive, to be fully aware of the current flowing up and down in the spine and subtle changes of mental states and states of awareness. During the extended intervals of stillness after exhalation, notice that thoughts are not as distracting or may temporarily stop. By learning to be thought-free and to detach attention from thoughts, you will be able to experience a clear superconscious state at will.

After kriya pranayama practice, sit for as long as you can in thought-free stillness. If attention is inclined to wander, contemplate Om, the Source of Om, the pure essence of ultimate Reality, and your pure essence (true nature). The key to effective use of meditation techniques and being superconscious is regular, attentive practice.

When practicing kriya pranayama, or any form of meditation, keep your attention focused on what you do and on what you observe when you are not doing anything. If you are not attentive or are too passive when practicing kriya pranayama, use will and intention to concentrate. Be aware of the flows of life force in the spine. If you are a new kriya initiate and don't yet feel the currents, imagine them flowing, and practice until you can feel them.

If you are aware of breathing and flows of current and your attention is still somewhat involved with mental or emotional conditions, further improve concentration by mental "listening" to a mantra along with inhalation and exhalation. At first, you may mentally say *hong* when inhaling and *sau* (saw) when exhaling. Or use *so–hum*, *Om–God*, *Om-Om*, *Om–guru*, or any two-syllable mantra that pleases you. Do kriya pranayama as simply as possible. Don't add mantras or other procedures unless they help you concentrate.

Do kriya pranayama smoothly and easily, breathing slower

than you usually breathe. Most people breathe 12 to 18 times a minute when they are sitting quietly. Experiment, breathing perhaps 6 times a minute, or more slowly, when doing kriya pranayama. Stay within your comfort zone. If you need to stop now and then to breathe more easily, you are doing it too slowly. When you stop kriya pranayama, keep your attention in the front and higher regions of the brain and sit still. Stay alert and attentive. Contemplate your pure essence.

The Purifying Effects of Kriya Pranayama and Frequent Superconscious Meditation

Kriyas are "actions, procedures, movements, and/or purifying processes" which we may implement or may spontaneously occur. When partial kundalini awakening has occurred or kriya pranayama results in spontaneous flows of prana through the chakras in the spine and brain when we are meditating or are not meditating, the chakras are enlivened and the capacities of the brain to process clear states of consciousness become more developed. That is one reason why kriya pranayama should be regularly practiced even when it is not necessary for eliciting states of superconsciousness. Aroused flows of prana refine the nervous system and vitalize the body. Superconscious influences that persist after meditation continue to refine the nervous system; weaken and dissolve troublesome subconscious conditionings; and increase the attribute of sattwa guna* (brightness, purity) that calms and regulates rajasic activity and overcomes the inertia of tamas guna. Impulsive inclinations, addictive tendencies, and harmful habits are more easily resisted and overcome. Thinking can be more rational. Intellectual abilities improve. Higher realities can more easily be comprehended.

Note: Three *gunas* (Sanskrit "threads" or "strands") are said to be energetic, constituent (component) attributes or characteristics of the expressive aspect of ultimate Reality and all levels of cosmic manifestation. Read about human behaviors related to them in the Bhagavad Gita, chapter 16.

Beyond Meditation Procedures and Techniques

Meditation techniques are only tools to be used to accomplish a purpose. When it is accomplished, you can put your tools away.
– Paramahansa Yogananda

Various forms of meditation can be adapted to the one's psychological temperament and ability to concentrate. Some of them are prayer; affirmation; mantra; meditation on Om; discriminative contemplation of one's pure essence and/or higher realities; pranayama; and absorption of attention and awareness in a chosen object of meditative contemplation. One, or several, of them may be used during meditation.

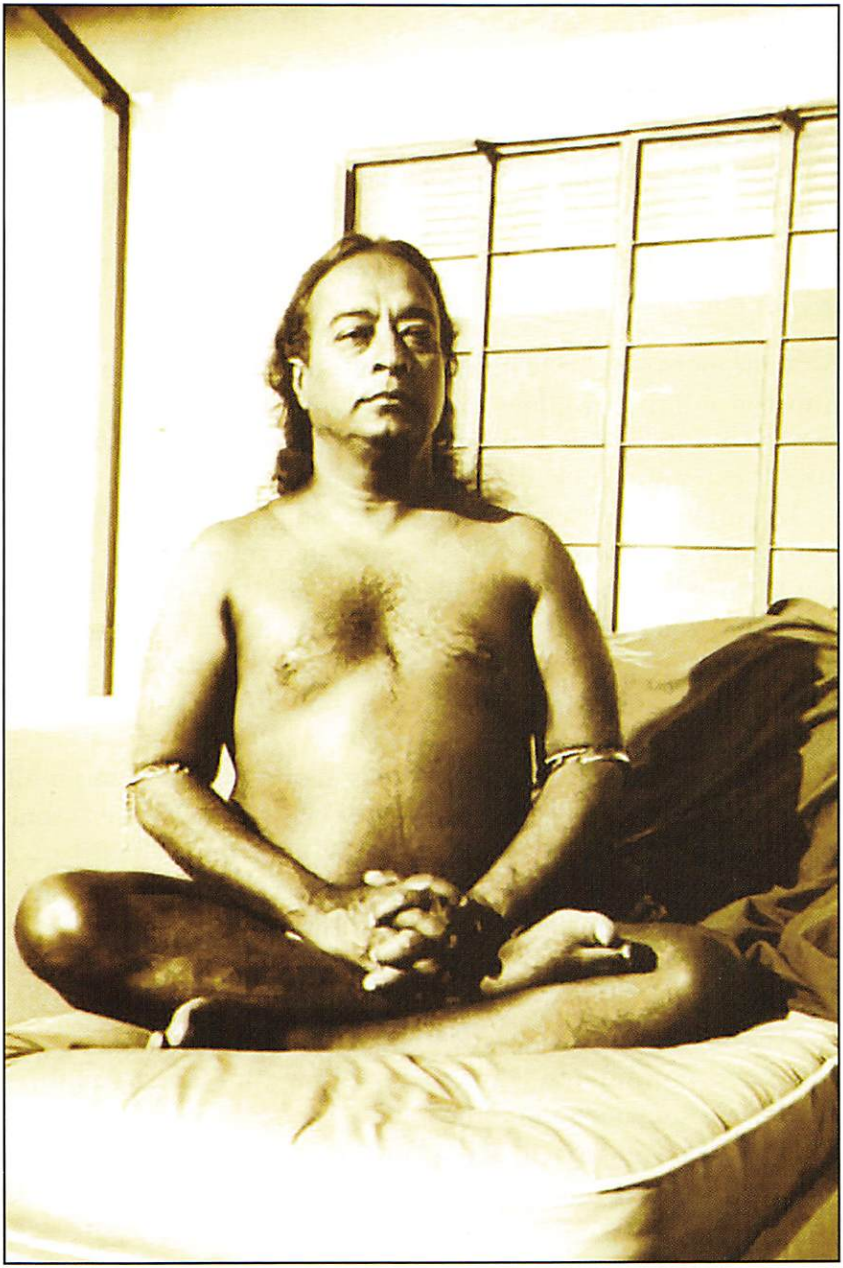
We should remember that meditation forms and techniques can be used to calm the mind and emotions so that undisturbed contemplation of our true nature and higher realities can then be more easily practiced. Regular sessions of sitting in silence, patient, without anxious concern about the outcome, yet with alert expectation of discovery (of insights and realizations), is recommended.

The alert, tranquil state of consciousness that prevails after practice of a mediation method or technique is the opportunity to go into the depths of your being where you will discover the truth that liberates your consciousness from all conditions that formerly confined it.

Samadhi is quickly realized by devotional surrender to God.
– Patanjali's Yoga-Sutras 1:23

Detaching attention from and letting go of our mistaken sense of self-identity while aspiring to realize (experience) the pure (absolute, transcendent) essence of ultimate Reality can result in firm oneness of our attention and awareness with it.

Mental restlessness is caused by restless prana.
– Lahiri Mahasaya



Paramahansa Yogananda (1893 – 1952)
Encinitas, California Late 1940s

Kriya Yoga Philosophy, Traditions & Practices

Readers are invited to send questions and inquiries which may be used in a future issue of this publication. Use the form that was enclosed with this issue or e-mail: **rd@csa-davis.org**

How long should kriya pranayama or other techniques be practiced during one meditation session?

As preparation for meditative contemplation: long enough to calm the mind and allow contemplation to be easier. Use the number of repetitions you habitually use or continue until your mind is calm and your attention is focused.

To enliven the chakras: if you don't need to do kriya pranayama to flow into meditation, before ending the session, do it to keep the energies of the chakras aroused and circulating.

Meditate longer than you practice kriya pranayama or any other techniques. During extended periods of sitting, if your attention is difficult to focus, use a technique to involve your attention until you no longer need to use it.

After meditation, endeavor to be mentally and emotionally calm, alert, and attentive. Constantly be aware of your essence as an immortal unit of the pure essence of ultimate Reality.

If you experience what may seem to be the ultimate extent of spiritual awakening, be curious about the possibility of what further awakening may be had. Don't stop at a pleasant or comfortable level of awakening, being satisfied with it or thinking that it is the final stage. You will know when you are fully awake. Until then, continue to learn and to allow your innate qualities and higher knowledge to come forth.

Meditation is undistracted concentration on that which is contemplated *after* performing rituals or practicing meditation techniques. Everything that is done before then is preparation.

Where others conclude their meditation practice,
I am just beginning.
– *Paramahansa Yogananda*

Although I have endeavored for several years to understand the metaphysical principles underlying the processes of nature, it is difficult to do it. How can I improve my ability to understand?

I will paraphrase words that were written by Paramahansa Yogananda's guru Swami Sri Yukteswar:

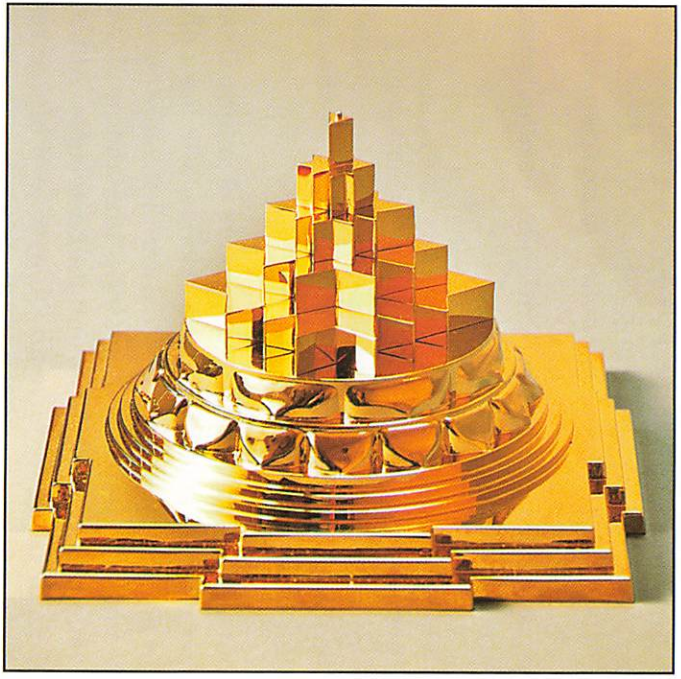
> One who is identified with the physical body and senses can only comprehend the manifested material components of ultimate Reality—but not their causes and subtle essences which can be directly known when one looks beyond the [visible] attributes of nature.

If we rely on our senses and a limited amount of information derived from others who lack higher knowledge, we can only be aware of the outer appearances of nature. To comprehend its inner side, we have to improve our intellectual and intuitive powers and unveil and bring forth our innate knowledge. At the innermost level of our being we have all knowledge of higher realities and the processes of nature and of life. We know how universes are produced and how and when we were individualized as units of the pure essence of ultimate Reality.

This knowledge can be somewhat intellectually understood, more completely known by intuition, and only fully realized by direct experience of it. One indication of authentic spiritual growth is an improved ability to know higher realities, which may occur so gradually that it is seldom noticed, or as sudden insights. When reading or hearing about higher realities, endeavor to go behind the words to what inspired them.

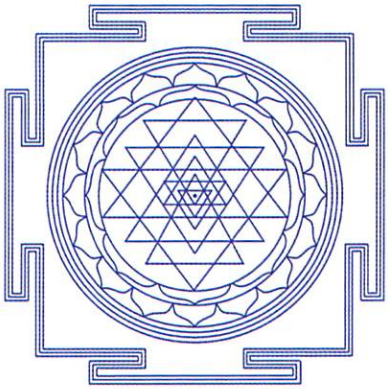
When Paramahansa Yogananda talked with disciples, he sometimes advised them to imagine a connection between their spiritual eye and his, and to endeavor to be in tune with his mind and consciousness. He said that when he wanted to write about someone who had lived many decades or centuries ago, he endeavored to "tune in" with them at his spiritual eye and access their state of consciousness.

Some yogis meditate on Sri Yantra to contemplate cosmic forces and their influences. (*Described on the following pages.*)



Left: Sri Yantra with mantras engraved on gold-plated metal.
Right: A three dimensional depiction of Sri Yantra cast from an alloy (mixture) of copper, silver, tin, antimony, and lead. 24-caret gold-plated.

sri "To shine." A word used to indicate respect.
yantra A geometrical design of circles, triangles, lotus petals (and sometimes mantras) in a square to contain their energies. Downward pointed triangles represent emerging cosmic forces; upward pointed triangles represent their return to their Source.



Eight petals represent forms, tastes, smells, touch, sound, Om, primordial nature, and the expressive aspect of ultimate Reality which sends them forth.

Sixteen lotus petals represent creative forces enabling the fulfillment of desires, five capacities of sensing (tasting, smelling, seeing, hearing, touching); five capacities of action (mobility, grasping or holding, vocalization, elimination, procreation); subtle element-influences (space with cosmic forces, air or gaseous substance, fire of transformation, water or lubricating characteristic, gross matter).

The outer circles represent energetic characteristics of the three gunas. The dot in the center represents unmanifest potential energy that can emanate universes.

Yantras are drawn or painted on paper, canvas, or other materials, or engraved on metal.

If Sri Yantra is visualized for the purpose of meditative contemplation, it is eventually dissolved and disappears into one's consciousness, as all material things are said to dissolve and disappear into That from which they emerged.

The all-pervading true Self shines in a pure intellect, like a reflection of the sun or moon in clear water or a clean mirror.
– Adi Shankara, 8th century / Atma Bode (Self-Knowledge)

When I try to meditate, it is difficult for me to sit still for more than 15 to 20 minutes. How can I sit longer?

You perhaps sit much longer when driving, talking with friends, eating, reading, or watching television—so you can do it when you want or have to do it. Want the benefits of meditation so strongly that you can sit still and concentrate for any period of time that you choose to practice.

To concentrate better, use a form of meditation or a helpful technique to involve your attention.

(Review the first article in this issue of *Radiance*.)

Mentally and Audibly Affirm
When I meditate, I can easily, calmly sit still
and effectively concentrate ... and I will.

With attentive practice, you can meditate easily, naturally, and enjoyably on a regular, daily schedule.

I like to think about philosophical ideas, do my best to try to live constructively, and (usually) meditate daily. I am also inclined to waste time in idle or purposeless talking; be impulsive; want to impress others and have them notice and approve of me; am sometimes moody or lazy; and have some habits and desires that are not compatible with my spiritual ideals. When, on our spiritual path, do we overcome or get rid of such ordinary behaviors and/or conditions? What can we do to more quickly and permanently overcome or get rid of them?

We either choose to renounce them or discard them as we grow to emotional maturity. It can be helpful to concentrate on your spiritual practices and constructive purposes. When you are aware of thinking about or doing things that should be ignored or renounced, immediately think and act in ways that are for your higher good. Kriya Yoga practice includes disciplined thinking and behaviors along with discriminative and meditative examination of our true nature and surrender of our mistaken sense of Self-identity that allows us to experience our true nature (*Patanjali's Yoga-Sutra 2:1*).

Is there a relationship between our gender and our potential to be spiritually enlightened?

Every person, as a unit of the pure essence of ultimate Reality, has the same potential to be spiritually enlightened. To think or act as though some people are spiritually superior or inferior because of their physiological, psychological, genetic, or other characteristics indicates lack of knowledge.

What can I do to be more easily and quickly Self-realized?

Replace thoughts and behaviors that confine and limit you with rational thinking and behaviors that clarify and expand your consciousness. Improve your understanding of your true nature and sincerely endeavor to think, feel, and live as a free spiritual being. If you were spiritually enlightened, how would you think and what would you do?

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NEWS

Read about the 4th International Kriya Yoga Congress in the June-July issue of *Truth Journal*. If you were there, you know how uplifting it was to participate. Almost 500 people attended the various sessions. Approximately 350 were at the Saturday afternoon kriya initiation and the evening banquet.

The 5th International Kriya Yoga Congress will be in 2016.

The First European Kriya Yoga Congress will be in Milan, Italy, the last weekend of April next year (2014). Inform your spiritual friends about this special event.

New Edition of *Seven Lessons in Conscious Living*

First published by CSA Press in 2000 in a 8.5 x 11 format. An English language edition was also published in Delhi, India, by Motilal Banarsidass. A Spanish language edition (*Siete Lecciones para Vivir Conscientemente*) translated by CSA member Gloria Donohue-Little is available as an eBook for an Amazon Kindle or an Apple iBook selection. The Spanish edition can also be read or downloaded free at our web site: **www.csa-davis.org**

The new moderately revised edition of *Seven Lessons in Conscious Living* was published in early May. It has a more convenient 6 x 9 page size and lower price. Even if you have a copy of the larger, workbook-size first edition, this new edition will be worth reading. Tell others about it.

If you have friends or acquaintances who are kriya initiates in our tradition but don't know about CSA, tell them to look at our web site. There must be thousands of kriya initiates who would benefit from reading our literature and attending some of our retreats and seminars when they are informed.

If you accept your thoughts as inspirations
from the Supreme Intelligence, obey them
when they prescribe difficult duties, because
they come only so long as they are used.
– Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803 – 1882)

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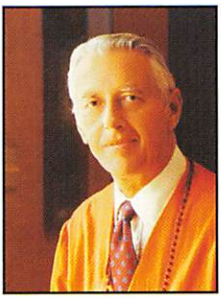
All Are Welcome **Donation at Kriya Initiation**



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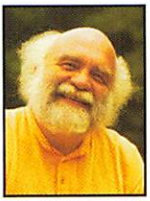

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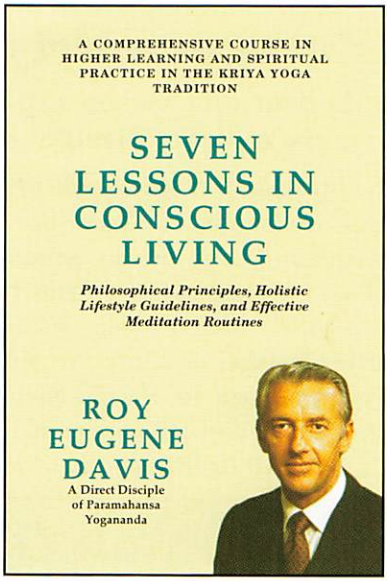
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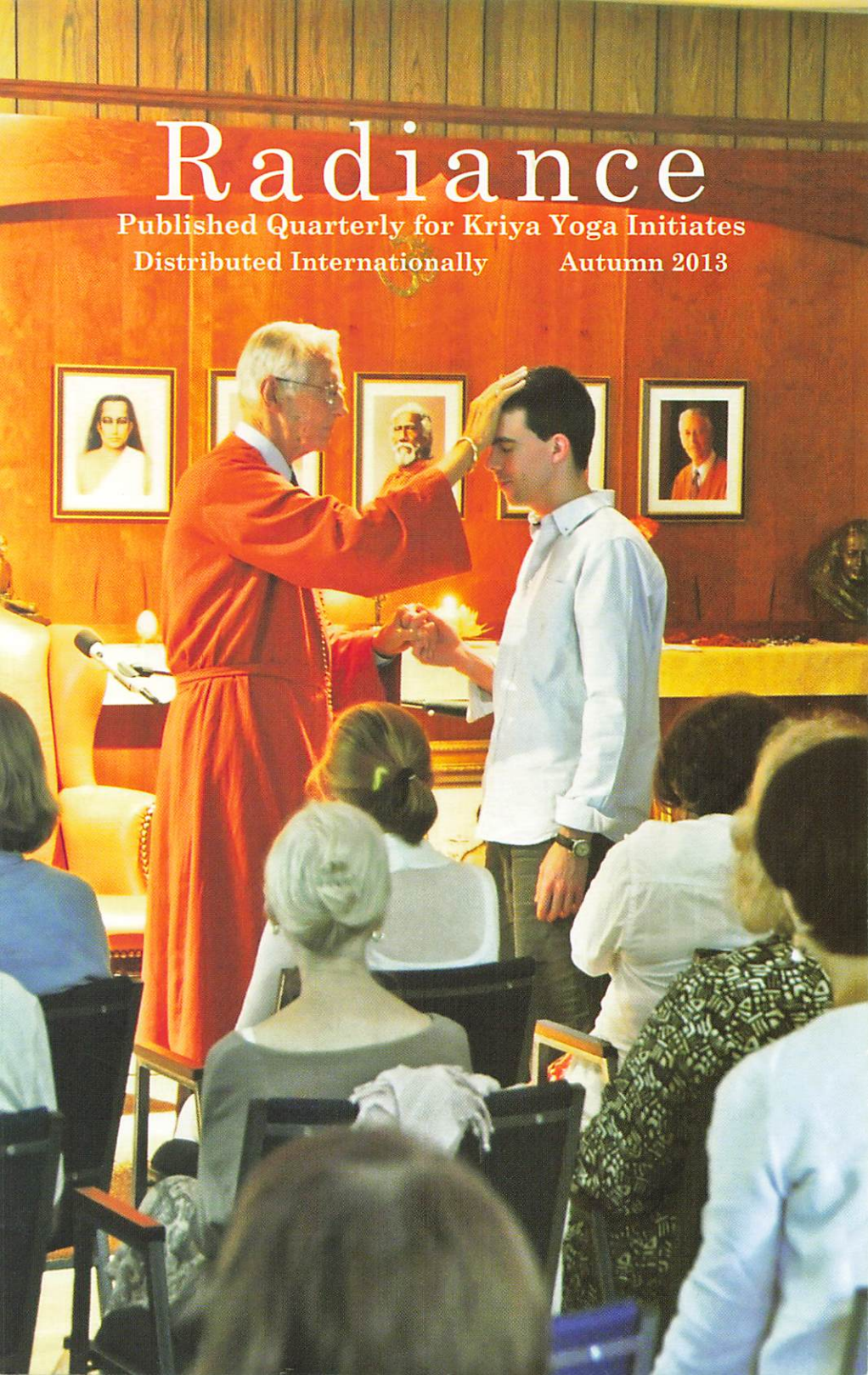

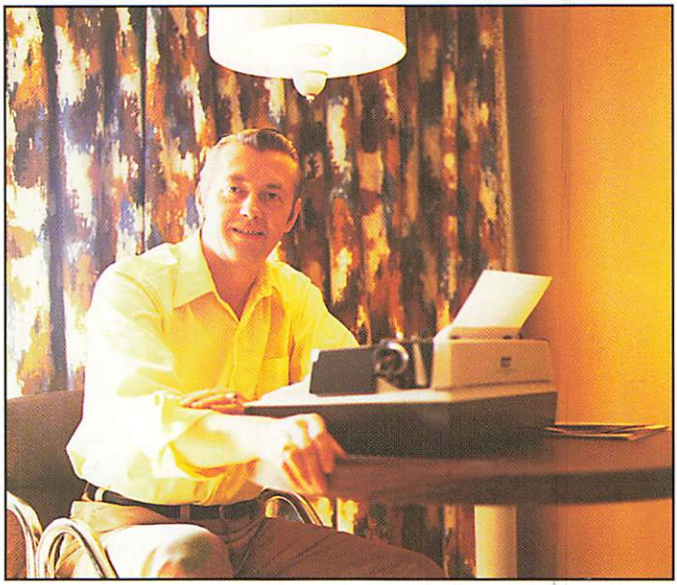

Roy Eugene Davis in Los Gatos, California,
during a lecture tour. *Early 1970s*

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To e-mail Roy Eugene Davis: rd@csa-davis.org
Web site: www.csa-davis.org

Kaivalya is transcendent realization of the eternal, pure essence [of ultimate Reality].
– Swami Sri Yukteswar (1855 – 1936)

The Ultimate [Furthest Extent] of Spiritual Awakening

Complete Self-realization (experience along with knowledge of our pure essence of being) liberates us from conditions which formerly constrained us because of identification with them.

Temporary liberation is experienced during transcendence while our awareness is removed from mental and physical conditions. Permanent liberation prevails when we are always firmly established in Self-knowing.

Fleeting episodes of transcendence that fade as awareness again becomes identified with subjective conditions and objective circumstances may motivate us to more intensively use spiritual practices which can elicit results we want to have.

The Sanskrit term for alert meditative transcendence is *nirvikalpa* ("not" supported by mental concepts) *samadhi* (unification of attention and awareness with one's pure essence).

Unification of attention and awareness with our essence of being is also called *yoga*. When spiritually enlightened gurus (teachers) tell disciples to practice yoga, they mean for them to "experience alert meditative transcendence" rather than only be preoccupied with yogic practices and meditation techniques.

Because brief episodes of transcendence which can provide insight may spontaneously occur when we are not meditating, we should be prepared for such experiences by being alert and attentive. We can do this by not letting our mind be confused and our awareness blurred by restless or irrational thinking, physical tiredness, stress, lack of sleep, emotional unrest, poor nutrition, overly stimulating or superficial social interactions, or disinterest.

During an ordinary experience of samadhi, attention and awareness may be identified with mental concepts, memories, physical or emotional sensations, or other perceptions. It is common for some meditators to mistakenly think that ecstatic phys-

ical feelings or pleasant emotions are indications of enhanced spiritual awareness or communion with God. After months or even years of having frequent "blissful" meditation experiences, they may wonder why they are not more Self- and God-realized, their ability to understand higher realities has not improved, and their thoughts, feelings, and behaviors are still ordinary (determined by habits, subconscious influences, and uncontrolled reactions to external events and conditions).

Alert transcendence should be the aim of our meditation practice. Frequent interludes of alert transcendence purify the mind and awareness. Meditating to manage stress and experience mental and emotional calmness can improve physical and psychological well-being but seldom results in obvious spiritual awakening.

It is easier to be alert during meditation when we choose to be alert, perceptive, and intentional when we are engaged in ordinary activities.

See Beyond and Rise Above the Limitations of Dreamlike States of Consciousness

People who say they want to be spiritually enlightened, and choose—or allow themselves—to think and act in "ordinary" ways, do not sincerely aspire to awaken from their confused, deluded condition.

Lack of knowledge of the truth causes one to mistakenly presume what is noneternal to be eternal, what is impure to be pure, what is painful to be pleasurable, and ego to be the real Self. Egoism results from indiscriminate identification with mind and matter. Preoccupation with pleasurable sensations produces affection for them which cause attachments.

– Patanjali's Yoga-Sutra 2:5–7

While endeavoring to meditate effectively and comprehend our true nature and ultimate Reality, we should wisely choose our thoughts, moods, and actions.

In the first verse of the second chapter of his Yoga-Sutra,

Patanjali included *self-discipline* when describing Kriya Yoga practice. Without self-discipline we cannot live successfully, meditate effectively, or let go of or rise above a mistaken sense of self-identity (ego).

Unless we are mentally incompetent, we already know (or can know) the mental attitudes, states of consciousness, behaviors, and habits we should replace with constructive attitudes, states of consciousness, behaviors, and habits. By doing what we know we need to do, we can definitely have all of our higher purposes accomplished and be fully Self- and God-realized.

The fundamental, virtuous, disciplined behaviors (*kriyas*) to adopt are compassionate harmlessness, truthfulness, honesty, constructive use of vital forces, and wise use of material things. Compliant adherence to these behaviors nurtures physical well-being, mental peace, emotional stability, harmonious personal relationships, and compatible environmental conditions. It is then easier to have the support of the processes of nature and of grace—effortless, timely emergence of fortunate events and circumstances.

Manifestations of grace are not produced by the arbitrary or whimsical choices or actions of a human-like deity; they are impelled to emerge by the innate inclination of the expressive aspect of ultimate Reality to nurture and provide for all forms of life—which are aspects of its life.

Because of our innate urge to be spiritually awake, when physical and psychological conditions that confine and blur our awareness are removed, spontaneous (not directly caused by what we do) spiritual awakening can rapidly occur.

Physical conditions that may interfere with our spiritual growth are debilitating illness; extreme weakness; low energy; too much stress; poor nutrition; environmental pollution; neurological disorders; and undeveloped regions of the brain associated with abstract thinking and processing refined states of consciousness.

Psychological conditions that interfere with or prevent our spiritual growth are mental perversity (egocentric, willful, immature thinking and behaviors), resistance to having to change

mental attitudes and behaviors; impulsiveness; unwholesome attachments and lifestyle preferences; addictions; worry; fear; and neurotic or psychotic characteristics. The primary, debilitating psychological condition results from a flawed perception of what we are—which causes us to mistakenly think that we are other than an immortal unit of the absolute (pure) essence of ultimate Reality.

When we know the complete truth of what we are, we don't need to aspire to have more understanding, endeavor to unveil and bring forth our innate qualities, or enlarge our capacities to be Self- and God-realized. Complete spiritual enlightenment provides accurate knowledge of higher realities or enables us to have it when we want to have it.

We know when we are spiritually enlightened. If we do not know we are enlightened, we are not fully awake. There is a difference between knowing something and only thinking or emotionally feeling that we know it. What we know empowers us.

A Self-realized person does not have delusions (erroneous ideas or beliefs) or illusions (flawed perceptions) and is highly Self-motivated to experience and express excellence in every aspect of life.

Until you have accurate knowledge of your true nature and of ultimate Reality, acquire accurate information so you will be able to think rationally, live skillfully, and meditate effectively. Avoid wasting time by overly analyzing philosophical concepts of people who are not completely Self-realized.

Frequently Ask This Question

Do my thoughts, emotions, words, and actions always clearly reveal my firm intention and unwavering commitment to be fully, spiritually enlightened in my current incarnation?

Paramahansa Yogananda speaking at a public meeting.
Encinitas, California, 1940s

Kriya Yoga Philosophy, Traditions & Practices

Readers are invited to provide questions and inquiries which may be used in a future issue of this publication. Use the form that was enclosed with this issue or e-mail: **rd@csa-davis.org**

Spiritual enlightenment and liberation of consciousness seems a distant event difficult to believe to be possible. If I don't "make it" in my current incarnation, what will my life experiences and personal circumstances be like?

It is your destiny to awaken to complete knowledge of your true nature. Instead of believing and feeling that you are a limited human being, acknowledge your divine essence and endeavor to think and be aware as that. During meditation, when you pray, affirm, practice kriya pranayama, or use other methods to calm your mind and concentrate, know that at the innermost level of your being you are always pure and whole. When your innate purity is no longer obscured by mental or emotional conditions, you will be consciously Self-knowing.

I learned about a group of kriya initiates in my community who meditate together once a week. When I asked if I might meditate with them I was told that their sessions were only for people who had been initiated by a teacher in their Kriya Yoga lineage. Why do they not allow other kriya initiates to attend?

Some Kriya Yoga gurus adhere to very traditional views and practices; others are more liberal. Some prefer to privately serve devotees; others choose to serve large numbers of truth seekers. My guru inspired and spiritually educated many people and provided personal guidance to disciples who could understand and apply what he taught.

The Kriya Yoga group you contacted is somewhat exclusive, wanting their initiates to be mentally and spiritually attuned to their teachers and teachings rather than wander from one teaching emphasis to another. People who investigate various Kriya Yoga teachers or teachings are sometimes surprised to discover

that some of the ideas and practices differ. That is because gurus tend to teach what they were taught, what they learned or experienced as a result of their own practices, and what they think others should know and practice.

Although Paramahansa Yogananda advised his disciples to respect other kriya traditions and all authentic enlightenment teachings, he told us to focus attention and practices on what he taught us to do. Subtle influences that may be transmitted through Kriya Yoga gurus should also be considered. Even when teachings are the same, or similar, the unique qualities of a guru's mental energies and states of consciousness can be different. Paramahansa Yogananda advised his disciples not to mix his teachings with other teachings or to try to be attuned to other teachings or teachers.

It is, of course, all right to be well-informed. The important matter is to be faithful (consistently committed) to the course of actions which are best for your purposes.

In recent years, I have noticed that some kriya initiates are inclined to be overly involved with interests, relationships, and activities which don't enhance their spiritual awareness. Some of them waste time and energy perusing Internet social sites, sharing ideas or gossip with others, and passing along useless information. If they meditated deeply every day they would be inclined to be more selective regarding what they think about and do, have more control over their impulses, and be able to more easily control their desires, emotions, and reactions to events that occur.

I have seen Internet sites and literature that describe how Mahavatar Babaji in our Kriya Yoga lineage has visited people in various parts of the world and has initiated them and told them to teach. Some of the "teachings" seem unrealistic or strange.

Before Paramahansa Yogananda left this world, he told me and several other disciples, not to believe such stories that he predicted would be circulated. In India and the United States, I met people who said that Babaji instructed them in a dream or vision or that they visited him in the Himalayas. Most of them

seemed to be sincere, and wanted to believe something that somewhat satisfied their need to feel secure or to feel that they had been chosen for a special, holy mission. A few of them were obviously promoting false stories to publicize their classes and attract a following.

I have read that some people say a human incarnation that enables one to work out mundane karma and have spiritual progress is rare. With more than seven billion people on our planet and more soon to be incarnated, the process seems to be very easy. Some people say that earthbound souls with unfulfilled material desires try to attach themselves to people in our world in order to have desires for sensation gratified. Also, that mental and emotional disturbances are caused by influences of such souls or of souls in astral realms which are confused or malevolent. Should any of these ideas be believed?

Such ideas indicate lack of knowledge, inability to discriminate, carelessness, or disrespect for others. Various simplistic or false ideas are commonly expressed in writings and casual conversations. Examples:

- People who are cheated or abused have cheated or abused someone, perhaps in a previous incarnation.
  The Truth: Most of our random experiences are related to an ordinary (conflicted and blurred) human conscious condition.

- Souls must incarnate millions of times to learn how to live effectively and be Self-realized.
  The Truth: There is no cosmic rule or law that decrees what souls (units of the pure essence of ultimate Reality) must do or experience. Some souls may aimlessly wander in space and time for centuries; many may quickly awaken to Self- and God-knowledge; others may never become involved with objective phenomena. Much of the information about reincarnation that is published or talked about is mere opinion. Instead of being preoccupied with reincarnation ideas, sincere truth seekers should nurture their spiritual growth.

- Souls have to incarnate in male and female bodies to acquire different viewpoints and be psychologically balanced.
  The Truth: Respect and appreciation for the processes of life and rapid development to emotional maturity can be had in one higher purpose-directed incarnation.

- An avatar or great spiritual teacher will soon emerge to create peace and harmony in the world.
  The Truth: This idea has been promoted in several cultures for thousands of years. Peaceful, harmonious conditions will prevail in our world when the majority of human inhabitants choose to live peacefully and harmoniously. Although the presence and deeds of spiritually enlightened individuals are helpful, widespread spiritual awakening is now needed.

- Evil powers and malicious influences attempt to prevent our well-being and interfere with our spiritual growth.
  The Truth: The one influential power in our universe is only constructive and life-enhancing. We need to learn how to cooperate with it by being mentally alert and optimistic, clarifying and expanding our consciousness, improving our intellectual powers and powers of perception, and bringing forth and wisely using our innate creative abilities.

- Everyone has a guardian angel.
  The Truth: Adherents of many religions profess to believe (or want to believe) in angels, gods, goddesses, devas ("shining" beings of light) and other *imagined* agents of a divine will or influence. Spiritually aware people know that their mental states, states consciousness, expectations, intentions, and actions produce and attract ideal events and circumstances.

- It is impossible for anyone to ever completely experience or comprehend God (ultimate Reality.)
  The Truth: As the consciousness of souls (units of the pure essence of ultimate Reality) is restored to its original pure wholeness, complete knowledge of their true nature and God (ultimate Reality) effortlessly emerges from within them.

- A celibate, cloistered, monastic lifestyle is always superior to other lifestyles and most useful for spiritual growth.
  The Truth: Although such a lifestyle may be suitable for a person whose psychological temperament is compatible with it, any holistic, well-ordered lifestyle will nurture our well-being and allow our spiritual growth to progressively occur.

Note: Our lifestyle is holistic when we are spiritually aware, mentally competent, emotionally balanced and mature, physically vital, and have harmonious relationships with people and all forms of life and with environmental conditions.

- Salvation (spiritually enlightened freedom from limitation and suffering or distress) is only possible if we firmly believe a specific religious doctrine and belong to a group of adherents of that doctrine.
  The Truth: Belief in a religious doctrine and association with its adherents cannot illumine our mind and consciousness. Freedom from painful conditions (whether severe physical discomfort, emotional trauma, disappointment, frustration, grief, or confusion and unhappiness) is assured when we are permanently Self-realized.

Regardless of the source of information, discern the truth with your intelligence, intuition, and rational thinking.

Suffering that has not yet occurred should be avoided.
Patanjali's Yoga-Sutra 2:16

When the mind is serene, the reality of God is reflected in it. That reality, all-pervading and eternal, transcends mind and intellect.
– Lahiri Mahasaya (1828 – 1895)

Upon awakening to Self-knowledge, there must be no trace of pride of attainment or attachments to prior conditions because they can cause a return to former states of consciousness.
– Patanjal's Yoga-Sutra 3:52

What are the most helpful practices that will enable me to stay on my spiritual path and steadily awaken to Self-realization?

The first most helpful practice is to deeply meditate on a regular daily schedule. Doing that with alert attention will contribute to mental and emotional stability, clarify your awareness, and confirm the sincerity of your aspiration to be spiritually enlightened.

Practice kriya pranayama at each session, then abide in the silence while contemplating your pure essence and oneness with the Infinite. If thoughts and fluctuations in your mind and awareness distract your attention, keep your attention constructively involved by continued, gentle kriya pranayama practice and contemplation of the Om vibration.

The next most helpful practice is to think, feel, and act with constructive intention. Be kind, honest, truthful, and wise regarding the use of your mental and physical powers and material resources. Only do what will produce or attract the results you want to have.

Spiritual growth can be quickened
by concentrated endeavor.
– *Paramahansa Yogananda*

Progress is in accord with intensiveness of
practice, whether mild, medium, or extremely
concentrated. Samadhi is quickly realized by
surrendered devotion to God.
– *Patanjali's Yoga-Sutra 1:22,23*

Endeavors are *concentrated* when our attention, thoughts, feelings, and actions are always coordinated for the purpose of accomplishing what is of highest value to us.

Spiritual *devotion* (ardent desire to experience oneness with ultimate Reality) is *surrendered* when we completely let go of or rise above our former mistaken sense of small, confined, limited sense of self-identity.

After a Kriya Yoga initiation service at Center for Spiritual Enlightenment in San Jose, California. *May 2013*

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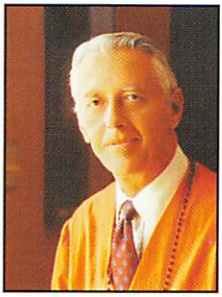

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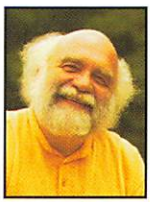

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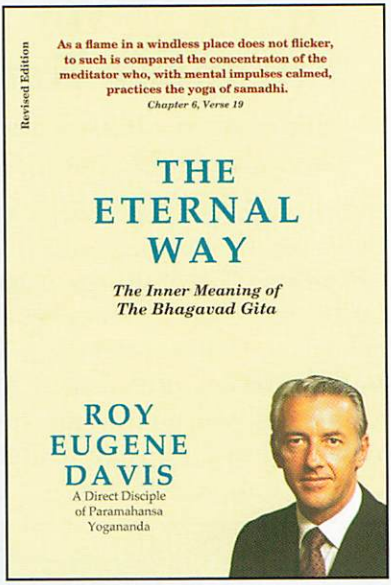
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As a flame in a windless place does not flicker, to such is compared the concentraton of the meditator who, with mental impulses calmed, practices the yoga of samadhi.
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Krishna is our enlightened consciousness. *Arjuna* is every disciple (learner or student) on a spiritual path who must learn to acquire and wisely use higher knowledge and transcend the mistaken sense of self-identity to be spiritually enlightened.

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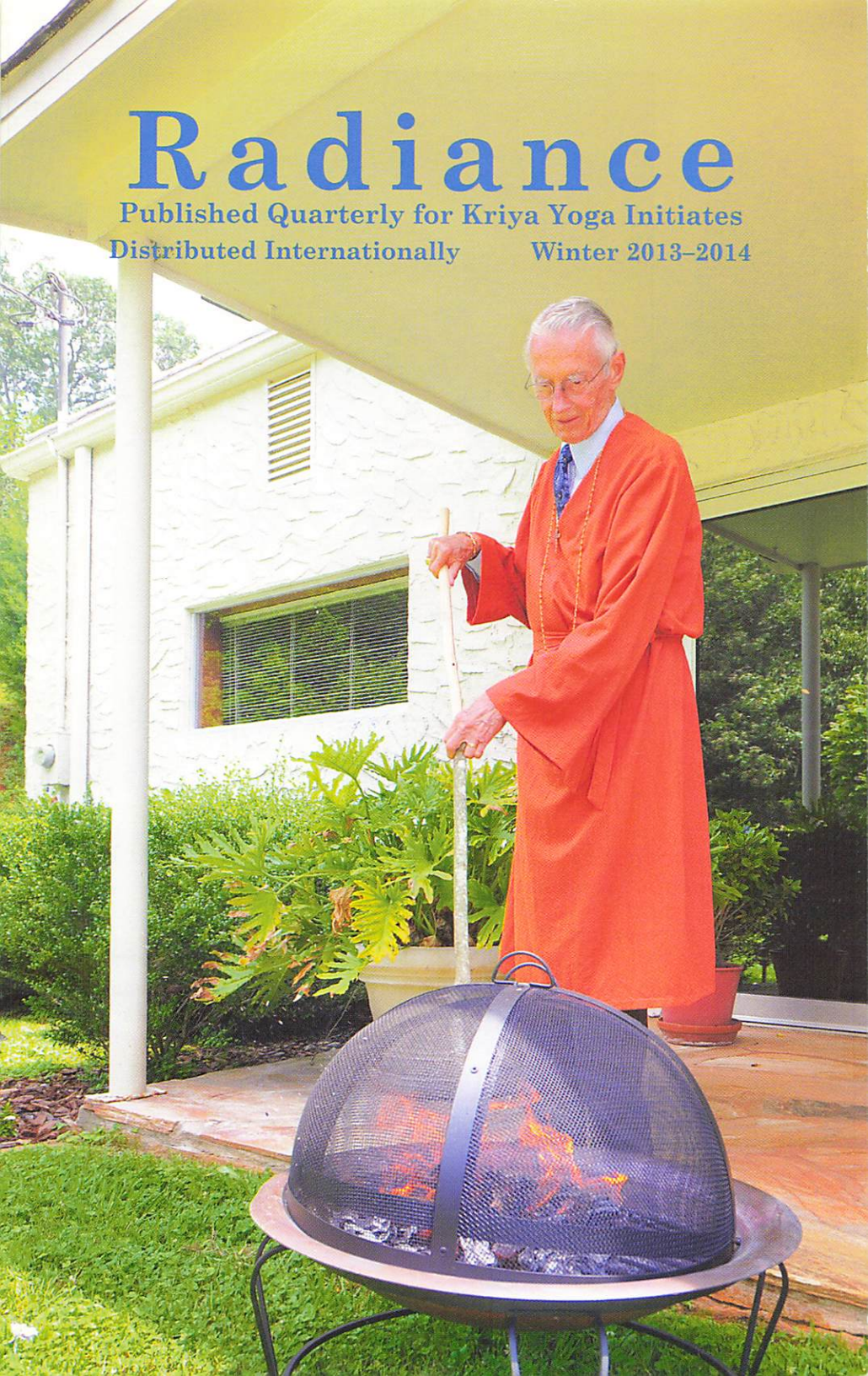

Roy Eugene Davis
Middle 1970s

Front cover photo: Burning bowl ceremony prior to a Kriya Yoga initiation at CSA headquarters. Summer 2013

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Center for Spiritual Awareness P. O. Box 7 Lakemont, Georgia 30552
Offices and Retreat Center on CSA Lane off Lake Rabun Road, Lakemont.
Tel: 706-782-4723 weekdays 8 a.m. – 3 p.m. Fax: 706-782-4560
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To e-mail Roy Eugene Davis: rd@csa-davis.org
Web site: www.csa-davis.org

Meditation results in divine revelation. From
the reality of one's being arises realization of
the pure Self, the indwelling divine essence.
– Lahiri Mahasaya (1828 – 1895)

Practicing Meditation Effectively

Until you are permanently Self-realized, when you first sit to meditate every day, remember the following words written two thousand years ago:

Sanskrit Verse
Yogah chitta vritti nirodha.
Patanjali's Yoga-Sutra 1:2

yogah *Yoga-is* firm holding together of attention and awareness with an object of meditative contemplation or with one's pure essence of being. In Patanjali's text, the word *yoga* is often used as a synonym for "samadhi" (oneness-realization). In this sutra, *yoga* is conscious experience-knowledge of one's pure essence of being.

chitta Individualized awareness still associated with a mind and intellect. In some commentaries *chitta* is incompletely defined only as "mind."

vritti *Vrittis* are fluctuations, movements, and changes in awareness and mind that blur and distort awareness, activate thoughts and emotions, and cause attention to waver. Stimulated by restless subliminal (below the threshold of conscious awareness) feelings and impulses.

niroda Resistance, turning back, quieting, stopping (of vrittis).

Transliteration
Samadhi is realized when fluctuations in the
mind and awareness are quieted and cease.

Movements and changes blur our mind and awareness and incline us to be outward-directed and forgetful of our essence of being. Yoga (samadhi) can be realized when fluctuation stop. It can also be realized by detaching attention from modifying in-

fluences and transcending them. Both ways of having our consciousness restored to wholeness (oneness) should be known and proficiently practiced.

Detachment of Attention From What We are Not

This is the direct, immediate way to Self-knowing that may be used when we are very alert and discriminating.

The first step is to intellectually know that you are a unit of the pure essence of ultimate Reality. If you do not know this, if you mistakenly think (and feel) that you are a small, confined, ignorant being perhaps burdened by karma or at the mercy of planetary influences, it may be difficult to rise above that mistaken sense of self-identity and to assume a different, free, self-view and experience.

By rational thinking you can intellectually know that you are not your physical body, mind, or the characteristics of your personality, all of which change in the course of time while you, as an observer, do not change. Be aware of the fact (truth) that you are an immortal, changeless being while you are engaged in everyday activities, then more attentively contemplate (look at with expectation of discovery) the truth of what you are when you are meditating. Your powers of discernment will improve and, from time to time, you will have revealing insights. When your attention is completely detached from all conditions and ideas which are not you, you will be clearly self-knowing. That clear, self-knowing may gradually emerge or it be revealed spontaneously (effortlessly). Self-realization is not produced or caused by anything you do; it emerges when conditions which obscured it are weakened or removed.

> Dispassionate nonattachment enables mastery
> of urges, cravings and instinctual drives. Higher
> detachment results from Self-realization that makes
> one impervious to influences of cosmic forces.
> *– Patanjali's Yoga-Sutra 1:15,16*

To be dispassionate is to be unemotionally and more easily

detached from something. When we are detached from various obvious conditions, cosmic energetic forces (*gunas*) may still influence our body, mind, and/or consciousness. Tamas guna (inertia) may contribute to dullness and lethargy. Rajas guna may aggravate restlessness. We should learn to detach our awareness from both influences. Sattwa guna contributes to clarity of awareness. Sattwic influences can be cultivated to somewhat neutralize tamasic and rajasic influences, then it, too, can be transcended. Sattwa guna can be cultivated by nurturing the characteristics it produces: calmness, patience, joyousness, compassion, kindness, honesty, truthfulness, orderly thinking and living, emotional stability, optimism, profound superconscious meditation, thinking about higher realities, and other actions that are life-enhancing.

When cultivating detachment, also discard delusions (false beliefs and opinions) and endeavor to accurately comprehend what you see, experience, or think about to avoid having illusions (misperceptions) about what is true.

The Meditative Way to Self-Knowing

Your self-training in detachment will be helpful to you when you meditate because it will be easier to disregard what cannot be helpful to you, and to discern and experience the truth about your essence and higher realities. Dull-minded, inattentive, or uncaring people cannot meditate effectively. They are inclined to sit passively, allow thoughts and emotions to dominate their awareness, sleep, or be attracted to subjective conditions such as memories, visual phenomena, pleasant sensations, or other kinds of perceptions or sensations.

To help spiritual aspirants meditate skillfully, a variety of forms of practice and techniques are available, such as prayer, affirmation, mantra recitation, subtle sound (Om) contemplation, pranayama, visualization, analytical contemplation, and transcendence. A meditation form or technique is effective when ideal results are experienced, usually because mind- and awareness-modifying influences are stilled or attention is withdrawn from external and subjective conditions, or both.

There are three astral (energy) channels (*nadis*) near the spine. Flows of prana in the right channel (*pingala nadi*) are said to have a warming or heating (solar, sun) influence with which functions in the left hemisphere of the brain are associated. Flows of prana in the left channel (*ida nadi*) have a cooling, calming (lunar, moon) influence with which functions of the right hemisphere of the brain are associated. When breathing is more forceful through the right nostril, life force is more pronounced in the right channel. When breathing is more forceful through the left nostril, life force is more pronounced in the left channel. When air flows evenly through both nostrils, life force is pronounced in the central channel in the spine and interactions between both hemispheres of the brain are more harmonious. Harmonious interactions between both hemispheres of the brain can help concentration to be better and reduce the intensity of random fluctuations in the mind and awareness.

Three ways to encourage harmonious interactions between the hemispheres of the brain:

1. *Alternate Nostril Breathing:*
   Nadi (Prana Channel) Cleansing Pranayama
   Sit upright and poised. Inhale. Exhale. Use fingers and/or thumb to close the nostril not being used. Close the right nostril and inhale smoothly through the left nostril. Pause for a moment. Close the left nostril, exhale smoothly through the right nostril. Inhale through the right nostril, pause, exhale through the left nostril. Repeat the procedure 10 times. Look into the spiritual eye and quietly meditate. Notice that you are more calm and your breathing is shallow and slow. This pranayama harmonizes flows of air in both nostrils and of prana in the corresponding channels along the spine. Use it sometimes to start your meditation session and anytime to calm your mind and think rationally. With practice, you will be able to mentally direct equal flows of air in both nostrils.
2. *Feeling Air Flow Evenly Through Both Nostrils:*
   A "centering" method and a way to learn to breathe evenly through both nostrils. Sitting upright and poised with your

eyes closed, breathing naturally, feel the air flow evenly in and out at the entrance of your nostrils. When you can feel it, the effects can be the same as the results of alternate nostril breathing, plus you will feel "centered"—calmly poised and relaxed in the present moment. You can do this before meditating or anytime when you want to be calmly focused. You may mentally chant Sanskrit mantras *Hong-Sau* (saw) or *So-Ham* (hum). Example: *So* as you inhale, *Ham* as you exhale.

3. *Attentive Practice of Kriya Pranayama:*
   Kriya pranayama directly increases the flows of prana in the central astral channel (*sushumna nadi*, radiant path). If you are a new initiate, practice kriya pranayama attentively until it is easy to feel the up and down flows of prana. Kriya pranayama can not only quickly internalize your attention, it enlivens the energies in the chakras, refines the nervous system, and gradually improves capacities of your brain to accommodate clear states of consciousness.

When meditating, observe your mental and emotional states and states of consciousness in relationship to how you breathe. When breathing is naturally slow and subtle, thoughts and moods will be less distracting. During natural pauses after exhalation, notice a thought-free gap or space and identify with it. After a while, ignore breathing and mental and emotional states, and rest in pure awareness of your essence of being.

It is natural to want positive results that meditation can provide. While meditating as skillfully as possible, avoid anxiety (worry, excessive concern) about the results. If we are impatiently hoping for indications of spiritual growth, we are not being Self-aware, peaceful, and fully alert in the moment.

Adhering to a well-ordered lifestyle is helpful to balanced spiritual growth. Some emotionally immature "truth seekers" attempt to dramatize their dedication to the spiritual path and rejection of cultural social values in various ways. Personal behaviors and rituals that support our spiritual practices should remain private. If we are trying to impress others (or our ourselves) or publicly demonstrate our uniqueness, we are too out-

ward. An authentic spiritual path is inward. When we are with others who don't share our philosophical views or lifestyle, there should not be anything about our appearance, conversation, or behavior that appears unusual or strange. The only "differences" should be our calmness, emotional stability, rational thinking, cheerful disposition, kindness, and optimistic mental attitude.

Be Completely Faithful (Devoted) to Your Spiritual Path

Being faithful to your spiritual path includes being devoted to seeing through and rising above all mistaken ideas about your true nature and aspiring to know ultimate Reality as it is.

Perform essential lifestyle regimens and spiritual practices with the understanding that what you do is for the purpose of unveiling your innate qualities and knowledge, and allowing them to be revealed. Consider how you think, feel, and live as important as your spiritual studies and meditation practices, rather than expect spiritual study and meditation alone to result in psychological transformation and Self-realization.

Many Kriya Yoga initiates have pleasant meditative experiences and easily elicit superconscious states mixed with subtle thoughts and mild emotions, but don't aspire to go beyond those preliminary stages. They are satisfied to have enough improvement in understanding and clarity of awareness to be happier and live comfortably. Having desires easily satisfied and resources available to live freely can help to provide a firm foundation for spiritual practices. Regardless of how comfortable our personal circumstances are, our ultimate aim should be spiritual enlightenment in our current incarnation.

In 1951, during an informal meeting with disciples, Master said, "I banished Yogananda long ago. Only God dwells here [indicating his body] now." He was informing us that we should also be so Self-realized that our personality would be a mask through which to view and relate to objective circumstances.

On another, similar, occasion, he said, "When you see me like this, as you have always known me, I am only acting for your benefit. Inside, I am completely detached."

A few months later, on March 7, 1952, he left his body.

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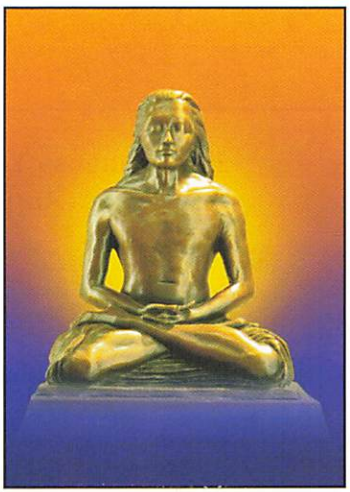
My guru had started to prepare for his departure in 1950. He stopped speaking at Sunday services at the San Diego and Hollywood SRF temples and retreated to his small house in Twentynine Palms to write his commentaries on the Bhagavad Gita and meditate. Only a few disciples were invited to visit him from time to time. When I was with him there, and at Kriya initiations and a few public events in Los Angeles, while he was intent on arranging for the continuity of the "work" (the word he often used when referring to his mission), there was an aura of remoteness about him. He was with us, yet seemed somewhat "other worldly"—as though he was already dwelling in a higher realm of existence and speaking and expressing through his physical form.

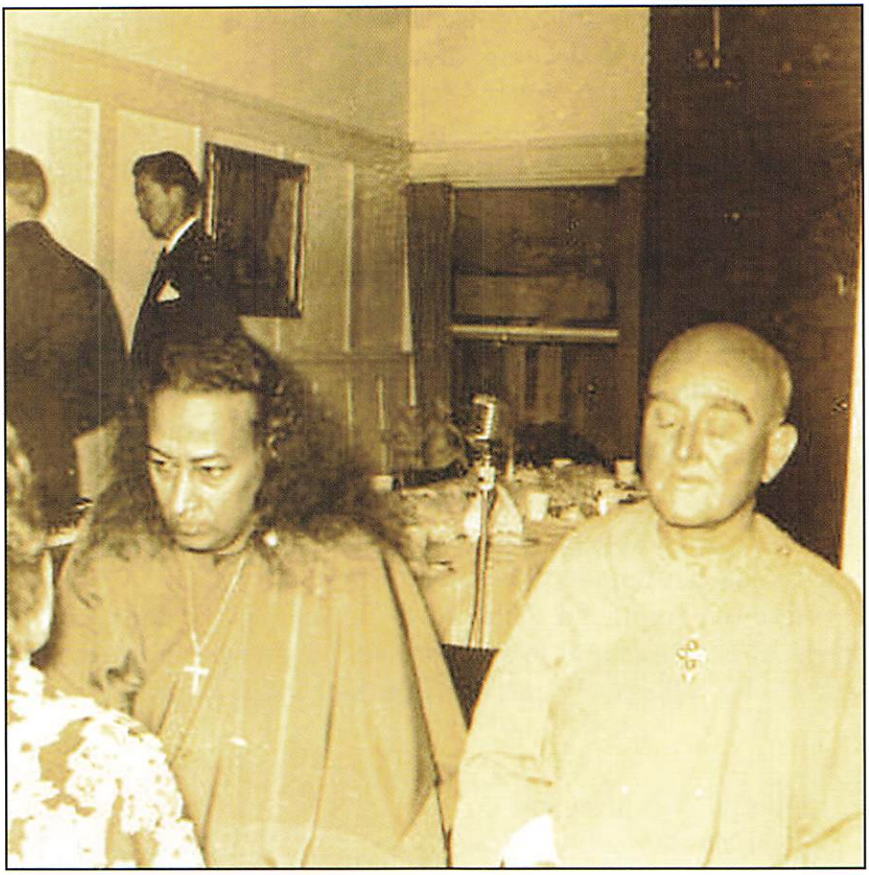
When Paramahansa Yogananda talked about "one hundred percent" dedication to a spiritual path, explained meditation methods, and described various realizations, he emphasized the importance of holistic, balanced, responsible living. From time to time, he expressed pleasure regarding how some of his longtime disciples had been good examples of how to perfectly blend spirituality with modern, practical ways of living.

He often reminded disciples to be completely dedicated to spiritual practices and to serve others who sincerely wanted to learn to live effectively and nurture their spiritual growth.

The timeless joyousness of one's essence of being is realized when restlessness ceases. True [liberating] knowledge can then emerge.
– *Swami Sri Yukteswar*



Bronze statue of Mahavatar Babaji



Paramahansa Yogananda and James J. Lynn
Autumn, Early 1950s

Kriya Yoga Philosophy, Traditions & Practices

Readers are invited to provide questions, inquiries, and themes which may be used in future issues. By letter or e-mail **rd@csa-davis.org**

How can I be detached from objective and subjective conditions without losing interest in accomplishing useful purposes and having wholesome personal relationships?

Removing attention from objective and subjective conditions can enable you to meditate without having distractions interfere with concentration. When you are not meditating, remembering that objective and subjective conditions are not permanent can enable you to relate to them without being tenaciously attached to them.

Lahiri Mahasaya didn't allow an institution to be established to promote him or his teaching endeavors. Swami Sri Yukteswar sponsored public meetings, wrote two books, and published a magazine. Paramahansa Yogananda's organization is still expanding internationally. Why do some yogis remain reclusive while others are mission-oriented in their teaching endeavors?

Yogis in human bodies have personal inclinations and ideas (or convictions) about what they should do, and are sometimes advised by their guru (or by inner guidance). In the late 1800s, in India, Lahiri Mahasaya's role, as directed by Babaji, was to live an ideal life in ordinary circumstances and quietly teach receptive people how to nurture their spiritual growth.

Swami Sri Yukteswar organized occasional public events at his ashrams in Serampore near Calcutta and Puri, and published a magazine that had a modest circulation. He wrote two books: *The Holy Science* and a commentary on the Bhagavad Gita. Of greatest importance was his training of Paramahansa Yogananda to travel to America in 1920. I heard one of my brother disciples ask Master, "What did Sri Yukteswar do for you?" Master quietly replied, "He made me what I am."

My guru emphasized the usefulness of "quantity work" and

"quality work." The "quantity" ministry was informing as many people as possible about their spiritual potential and how to have it actualized. He did it by lecturing widely in the 1920s and 30s and later wrote books to further extend his influence. His most widely known book, *Autobiography of a Yogi*, is now published in 30 languages; the most recent editions are in Russian and Sanskrit. His "quality" ministry was personal interaction with disciples, of which a few were Self-realized.

That so few people are sincerely interested in spirituality and few among them are able to experience noticeable spiritual growth should not cause us to allow our resolve to help them be weakened or to abandon our right endeavors on their behalf. We should continue to serve well as karma yogis—performing constructive actions without desire or need for praise or an inclination to stop because of a seeming lack of positive results. We should do what we know is best—what we are "called" to do—as our spiritual duty. That understanding, and sense of duty, has motivated me for more than sixty years.

During my middle teenage years, while reading books and learning about yoga practices, I mentally "saw" myself in the future, traveling widely as a spiritual teacher. While reading *Autobiography of a Yogi* at age eighteen, I knew that this Kriya Yoga tradition was for me. A few months later I went to California to meet Paramahansa Yogananda. In 1950, he told me, "You came to help me with his work." After a little more than two years, when he ordained me, he said, "Teach as I have taught and initiate devotees of God into Kriya Yoga."

Our Kriya Yoga tradition will be more widely publicized in 2014 when a documentary film—*Yogananda: A Modern Mystic*—will be distributed by CounterPoint Films, an independent producer in Los Angeles. Previews have been shown to a few groups of people. More information will be provided when public distribution plans are announced.

Enlightened gurus can share helpful information and their clarified awareness (when truth seekers are receptive enough to receive it). Disciples (learners) have to be faithfully devoted to right living and effective spiritual practice. People who don't

have the capacity to understand higher realities, or are more concerned with mundane matters than with improving their understanding, are not spiritually helped by the wise words or the enlightened presence of a Self-realized person.

While it is true that there are not many enlightened gurus who are readily accessible, there is an abundance of helpful information about holistic living and spiritual practices that can be accessed. No reasonably intelligent person can honestly say that they cannot be informed about the truth of their essence of being, their relationship with the Infinite, and how to clarify their awareness. It is not necessary to constantly go from one teacher or teaching to another. When the right information is discovered, right application of it is essential.

I know people who frequently attend lectures or seminars presented by almost every new age teacher, yogi, shaman, or "quick enlightenment" promoter who visits their community, without demonstrating obvious benefits. I am also aware of a few individuals who have been reading my writings for many years (some are Kriya Yoga initiates) who do not yet meditate on a regular schedule or sincerely endeavor to live effectively.

Kriya Yoga initiation should be "a new beginning," an ideal occasion to renounce (discard) nonuseful or debilitating mental attitudes, habits, behaviors, and relationships, and choose to cultivate entirely constructive ways of thinking and acting.

A major obstacle to spiritual growth (emergence of innate qualities and Self-knowing) is strong identification with, and attachment to, a mistaken sense of self-identity that inclines a person to endeavor to defend and protect it—or to exaggerate its importance. Rise above such mental attitudes and behaviors by deciding to do it and regular superconsciousness meditation that allows you to have transformative insights and experience your changeless, pure essence.

What concepts, ideas, or insights about God are mentioned by Yoga gurus (teachers)?

Descriptions of God vary according to how higher realities are thought about or known to be. People with little or no insight

usually talk about God in traditional ways, as having human-like characteristics and inclinations. Some yogis speak only of an ultimate Reality with a pure essence and an aspect with attributes that manifest universes, which they say can be realized (experienced and known). Others refer to an aspect of ultimate Reality which is more approachable, but not directly involved with the material realm and human affairs.

Ishwara [lord, ruler, God], omniscient, omnipotent, and
omnipresent cannot be compared to relative phenomena.
Transcending time, it is the teacher of the ancient teachers.
Om is the evidence of the existence of Ishwara (God).
One should meditate on Om.
By meditation on Ishwara [God] all obstacles [to samadhi]
are removed and its reality is realized.
Patanjali's Yoga-Sutra 1:25– 29

Those statements imply that, even though removed from direct involvement with us, there is an influence that can assist us to experience revelations of our innate qualities and knowledge. In some commentaries Sanskrit *Ishwara* is replaced with the word *God*: a word that was not originated or used in the sacred writings of any culture until the 1600s.

Samadhi is realized quickly by devotional
surrender to Iswara [God]. – *Yoga-Sutras 1:23*

Yoga gurus say that what is referred to as God is not moved by our prayers or actions and does not bless us, test us, or interfere with our lives. When we are able to somewhat rise above our egocentric state and apprehend God's existence or reality, it attracts our attention like a magnet and purifies our intellectual capacities, mind, and powers of perception—thus restoring our consciousness to its original wholeness.

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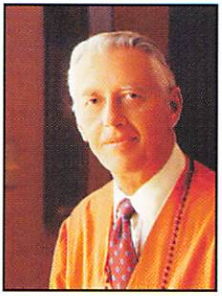

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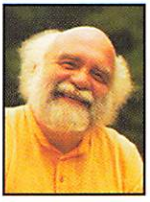

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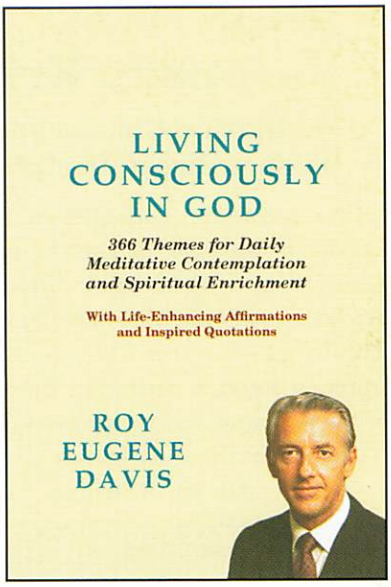

366 Themes for Daily Meditative Contemplation and Spiritual Enrichment

With Life-Enhancing Affirmations and Inspired Quotations

Because only one ultimate Reality commonly referred to as God exists, and souls are units of the pure essence of that Reality, we are always existing in it. Until we are fully conscious of our true nature, it can be helpful to aspire to be spiritually enlightened, adhere to a holistic lifestyle, be higher purpose-directed, meditate superconsciously every day, and nourish the mind with constructive ideas. – *from the Preface*

Affirm With Gratitude
In the deep silence of daily meditation I become increasingly aware of my true nature and relationship with the Infinite.

You are on Earth for but a little while.
The real purpose for your being here is very
different from what you may have imagined.
– *Paramahansa Yogananda*

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Radiance

Published Quarterly for Kriya Yoga Initiates
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With Dr. Masaharu Taniguchi (1893 – 1985),
founder of Seicho-No-Ie (Home of Infinite Life).
Tokyo International Airport, September 1964.

Self-realization is the *Self-revelation* of our true nature which illumines our consciousness.
– Lahiri Mahasaya (1828 – 1895)

You can quicken your spiritual growth by [right] concentrated endeavor.
– Paramahansa Yogananda (1893 – 1952)

Understanding Kriya Yoga Practices

Moral thinking and behavior, disciplined thinking and living, profound study of higher realities, constructive affirmation, and imagining ideal states of consciousness and circumstances provide a firm foundation for psychological health and spiritual awakening. Three transformative practices which purify our personality-oriented sense of self-identity [ego] and allow our pure conscious essence to be experienced are daily Kriya pranayama, superconscious meditation, and contemplation of ultimate Reality. They are mentioned in the Bhagavad Gita and the Yoga-Sutras.

The practitioner of Yoga should steadily contemplate the supreme Reality, in solitude, alone, with mind and body controlled, without wanting anything else.
– Bhagavad Gita 6:10

A person who practices *yoga* is intent on practicing *samadhi*, the firm bringing together of attention and awareness with his or her essence of being rather than passively sitting in silence.

Some yogis offer apana into prana and prana into apana to neutralize them.
– Bhagavad Gita 4:29

The Sanskrit words *prana* and *apana* indicate aspects of life force that govern exhalation and inhalation, respectively. They may be harmonized by neutralizing flows of life force along the right and left sides of the spine and by having life force flow in the central astral channel (*sushuma nadi*), "the radiant path." This can naturally occur or pranayama practice can be done.

When the meditation posture is stable, pranayama
naturally occurs. Breathing is coordinated and subtle,
and prana flows freely.
Modifications of pranayama are external, internal,
or still; long, short, or restrained; or regulated by
time and number [of repetitions].
A fourth modification of pranayama neutralizes
the inflowing and outflowing breaths.
– Patanjali's Yoga-Sutras 2:49,50,51

Pranayama (extension of inhalation, exhalation, and the pause between them) can naturally occur when we are very still and experienced and by using the Kriya Pranayama taught in our tradition during initiation. Practice of that technique quiets the fluctuations (wavelike movements) in the mind and awareness that interfere with endeavors to concentrate and obscure perceptions of our pure essence.

Kriya pranayama should be practiced with alert attention while being fully aware of the changes that occur: relaxation, internalization of attention, emotional calmness, more subtle mental activity, and increased clarity of awareness. It can be helpful to notice the gaps (spaces) between streams of thoughts especially during intervals of temporary pause, usually after exhalation. When awareness without thoughts is experienced, experiment by assuming that kind of awareness at will, when you are meditating and at other times when you want to be aware and thought-free in the moment.

If you practice many repetitions of Kriya Pranayama, stay alert and observant. When you are calmly attentive and your awareness is clear, stop doing the technique and go deeply into the silence. If you get to the conscious thought-free stage with only a few repetitions of Kriya Pranayama, before concluding your meditation session, practice several repetitions to keep the chakras enlivened.

If you experience pleasant sensations in the spine and other places in your body when doing Kriya Pranayama or when you pray or are devotional, you may enjoy those physical sensations without clinging to them. Being addicted (strongly attached) to

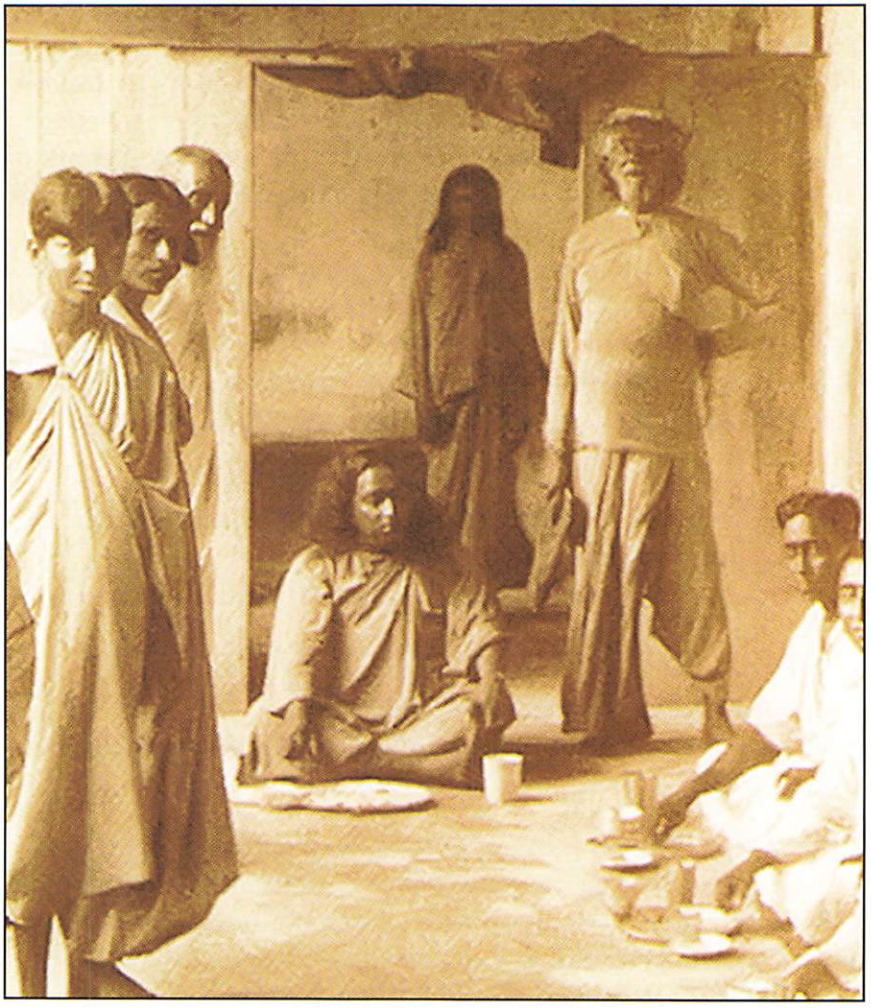
changing meditative perceptions, physical or subjective, is an obstacle to spiritual growth to be avoided.

The bliss (*ananda*) mentioned in many Yoga texts is not a physical sensation or an emotion; it is the pure joyousness of Self-experience. Thus our pure essence is defined as Existence-Consciousness-Bliss (*Sat-Chit-Ananda*) which may be experienced during superconscious meditation or other occasions of transcendence, and will be constantly experienced when we are spiritually enlightened.

Permanent, conscious experience-knowledge of our true nature will completely liberate (free) our mind and consciousness from influences that modify them. In Patanjali's Yoga-Sutras (1:6) influences that modify (blur and distort) our mental states and awareness are: random thoughts; false ideas; fantasies (uncontrolled imagination); sleep; and memories.

- Thinking can be well-ordered and rational. Restless mental states can be calmed.
- False ideas and notions can be discarded and replaced with accurate information.
- Powers of perception can be improved.
- Imagination can be creatively controlled.
- Sleep can be restful and restorative without modifying Self-awareness.

To be impervious to influences that may modify mental states and awareness, improve your ability to discriminate (know the difference) between yourself as an unchanging witness of your mental states and states of consciousness. You can do it if you sincerely want to be consciously Self-knowing and freely expressive. For inspiration and motivation, identify with your pure essence instead of thinking of yourself as being confined by a limited sense of self-identity. Remember that you are an immortal, spiritual being. Endeavor to think, feel, and act without restrictions. Patiently (calmly, without anxiety or worry) persist in the right ways until you prevail.



Paramahansa Yogananda (seated) with Swami Sri Yukteswar.
India, 1935

Learn to be fully aware of the contents of the subconscious and unconscious levels of your mind. Weakening and neutralizing troublesome inclinations and tendencies will enable you to control and remove unwanted karmic (causative) conditions. Learn to view your memories with objectivity so that you can remember your history without being attached to events or experiences or having unpleasant reactions—such as debilitating thoughts and feelings of guilt, regret, sadness, resentment, anger, unworthiness, or incompetence.

Understand and be comfortable with the fact that your current incarnation will eventually end and you will move on (or awaken) to another plane of continuing existence or transcend relative planes and dimensions. While you are here, you can completely awaken to Self-realization while you are also living skillfully and effectively. Your spiritual awakening will enable you to live more skillfully and effectively and living like that will quicken your spiritual awakening.

Are You One Hundred Percent Committed to Your Spiritual Path and Do You Always Live Skillfully and Effectively?

Examine your habitual mental attitudes, thoughts, moods, behaviors, personal relationships, leisure time activities, and what you consider to be most important for you to do and have.

Are all of the aspects of your life (existence) harmoniously integrated or blended? Are you always comfortable with your subjective (inner) and objective (outer) conditions?

Do you think and feel (or know) that you are doing what is best for you? If you are not certain, discover how to be on your right course in life, doing what is compatible with your aspirations, purposes, psychological temperament, intellectual capacity, knowledge, and skills.

Outgrow small-minded attitudes, inclinations, habits, and behaviors that oppose and interfere with your innate urge to be spiritually enlightened.

Be childlike (not *childish*). Maintain an attitude of wonder about learning all that is worth knowing. Learn the facts of life. Learn practical things, too, and wisely use them.

Be willing to grow to emotional maturity—to be responsible for the effects of your mental states, moods, habitual behaviors, and choices of actions. Don't frequently make excuses or ask to be forgiven for mental or physical laziness or inattentiveness. Don't constantly complain, blame, be judgmental, or be angry or resentful.

If you need to acquire useful knowledge and skills, do it.

Do what you need to do to be as healthy and freely functional as you can be.

Be selective regarding social activities and with whom you associate. Be cheerful, friendly, kind, thoughtful, and courteous with everyone.

Decide what is important for you to do and what is not important. Do what is important. Avoid or minimize what is not important.

Alertly meditate every day. Be constantly inspired and motivated by knowing that most Self-realized men and women usually meditate daily to be anchored in the Infinite.

Express compassion for others and all forms of life and pray (mentally and spiritually "see") and sincerely wish for the complete well-being of everyone and all forms of life.

When you see, hear, or think of someone, silently acknowledge their innate, divine nature.

Your permanent "home" is deep, inner space. To be involved with outer events and circumstances to the extent that you are Self- and God-forgetful is detrimental to your personal and spiritual well-being. Learn to meditatively abide in your essence and to be Self-knowing when you are engaged in ordinary activities and relationships.

Affirm With Conviction

I am one hundred percent committed to my spiritual path!
I fully support my constant aspiration to be Self-realized with constructive mental attitudes and right, decisive actions!

Kriya Yoga Philosophy, Traditions & Practices

Readers are invited to provide questions, inquiries, and themes which may be used in future issues. By letter or e-mail **rd@csa-davis.org**

Although I became a Kriya Yoga initiate a few years ago, only during the past few months have I been able to understand the philosophical principles and I am more focused on the essential practices. Is this a common occurrence among kriya initiates?

We learn and spiritually awaken in accord with our capacity to do it and the intensiveness (concentration) of our right endeavors. Some truth seekers do it slowly, others do it more quickly. Also, as we become more aware of our need to grow to emotional maturity and be responsible for what we think and do, we may be inclined to be more attentive to right living and nurturing our spiritual awareness.

Some kriya initiates faithfully adhere to holistic lifestyle regimens and spiritual practices that allow their pure essence of being to be unveiled and revealed.

Others are focused in constructive ways for several weeks, become disinterested or distracted, then start again, and are inclined to repeat those patterns of behavior.

A few become involved with personal matters and/or mundane affairs to the extent that they neglect their metaphysical studies and spiritual practices for many years.

Many occasionally think about higher realities, meditate regularly to the stage of mental and emotional calmness, and are mostly concerned about ordinary, everyday events, circumstances, and relationships.

An authentic, meaningful spiritual path (actions that allow spiritual awakening to spontaneously occur) is personal, inward, and private. Even when we have friends who share our philosophical views and also aspire to Self- and God-realization, our inner transformations and discoveries are for us to experience.

How can I always be Self- and God-aware when I am engaged in ordinary activities and relationships?

Acknowledge your true nature as a unit of the pure essence of ultimate Reality (God) and that Reality *in* and *as* all events, situations, and relationships.

Before concluding your early morning meditation, remember the oneness of life and be aware of it. Maintain that awareness throughout the day.

I have heard Yoga described as a practice that enables a person to be "united with God." Is that an accurate explanation?

It is more accurate to say that yoga practice can unify (join or bring together) our attention and awareness with our true nature or with what we choose to contemplate and identify.

To say that a spiritual practice can make us one with God is to imply that we are separate from God, which is not true. We don't have to be united with ultimate Reality because we have always been a unit of its pure essence. If we are not yet aware of our true nature, we can awaken to Self-knowing. If we are not yet God-conscious, we can awaken to that realization.

Accurately defining and using words is a spiritual exercise that can help us think rationally and communicate effectively. Saying that we want to be united with God, or that we want to "find God" indicates that we think of God as a being or entity other than or distinct from us. It is more useful to intend to experience and know our true nature and ultimate Reality, and persistently investigate them until we do.

Self-realization makes God-realization possible. We cannot know and experience God while we are identified with modified mental states and awareness. To know that ultimate Reality, our intellectual and intuitive capacities must be more highly developed. To directly experience it, our capacity to transcend our small sense of self-identity must be improved. Our effective spiritual practices purify the mind, clarify awareness, refine the nervous system, and improve the capacities of the brain to process clear states of consciousness.

I want to meditate effectively but have difficulty sitting still and keeping my attention directed inward. Can I do something else that will be just as beneficial, perhaps meditate while walking, listen to music, or sing or chant?

Although being relaxed and alert when walking, inspired when listening to music, and devotionally concentrated when chanting can be enjoyable and beneficial they don't elicit the same beneficial perceptions and experiences that can be provided by attentive superconscious meditation. Superconscious meditation detaches attention from all objective and subjective conditions, allowing experience of our pure conscious essence without relying on sense perceptions, thoughts, or emotions.

You *can* sit still if you decide to sit still. You *can* keep your attention inward with repeated practice.

Be intentional. Sit upright, poised and alert. Decide to focus on the purpose of practice, which is to detach attention from external conditions, feelings, moods, and mental states. Use a form of meditation—pray, affirm, imagine, mantra, practice kriya pranayama. When your mind is calm, go more deeply within. Listen to Om (or any subtle sound that is heard) and aspire to experience pure existence-being. With a regular schedule you will soon be able to inwardly meditate effectively.

If you sit for an hour or more, inwardly focused, sit a while longer without looking inward, still, eyes closed or open, calmly aware in the moment. Be disinterested in thoughts, feelings, or sounds. Calmly be there. You will be soul-centered and calmly observant at other times when you want to be like that. You will discover that you don't have to completely detach your attention from external conditions to be superconscious.

That which regulates the cosmos is in all
things and creatures. Those who discover
it in themselves have eternal bliss.
– *The Katha Upanishad*

How does (or can) devotion affect our spiritual practice?

devotion Ardent (warm soul or heartfelt) attraction or attachment, perhaps with an urge or desire for relationship, communion, or consummation.

I heard Paramahansa Yogananda say, "Devotion to God is better than practice of meditation techniques; together, they are an unbeatable [superior] combination."

Without devotion that purifies our ego (small sense of Self-identity) and enables us to detach attention and awareness from objective and subjective conditions, we may be inclined to think that we can be self-realized by our own endeavors. When we are devotional, we may not always be able to calm the mind and be superconscious. That is why my guru emphasized the usefulness of effective meditation methods combined with devotion.

Ardent devotion can keep us motivated to think and live in the right ways and to faithfully adhere to beneficial routines of meditation. When using a mantra, Kriya pranayama, contemplating Om, or sitting silently, aspire to experience your pure-conscious essence until you feel that you are almost there, then surrender (let go of) your desire and allow an adjustment of viewpoint to occur.

Letting go of a strong attachment to or connection with a sense of independent self-identity can allow our attention and awareness to be detached from it. When we again relate to our personal sense of self we can learn to perceive it as a viewpoint from which to relate to others and objective conditions while knowing that we are not them.

Right thinking and living, along with practice of effective meditation methods and calm but fervent devotional aspiration to be spiritually awake, is redemptive Kriya Yoga practice that removes all obstacles to Self-realization (*Yoga-Sutras 2:1,2*).

If you want to discover what you are looking for,
remove what is hiding your heart [pure essence].
– Kabir (1440 – 1518)

I don't actually feel a current in the spine when I do kriya pranayama. What can I do to have that awareness and feeling?

Improve your awareness of your spine. Do exercises and/or yoga postures that gently stretch the spine.

To do the pranayama, sit upright, relaxed and poised. Feel the bottom of your spine and be aware in the front and top of the brain. Imagine a hollow tube extending from the base of the spine to between your eyebrows, then to the crown chakra.

Inhale and exhale two or three times. Pause. Gently close your throat just a little, or drop your chin downward a little to partially close your throat. With your mouth partially open or closed, inhale smoothly, bringing the air down into your throat, producing a mild "suction." Air flowing in the moist throat should feel somewhat cool. Relate that cool sensation to your spine and feel it rising upward through your spine to the front of the brain and to the crown chakra as you breathe in. Pause a moment. Naturally exhale, feeling (or imagining) a soothing, warm current flowing down through the brain and spine. Pause a moment, then repeat the process as many times as you want to do it. With attentive practice, you should soon be able to actually feel a pleasurable sensation flowing up and a soothing, warm sensation flowing down. Even if those feelings are not pronounced, kriya pranayama practice will internalize your attention, calm your mind, clarify your awareness, and improve your ability to concentrate.

To conclude, draw the current upward, leave it in the third eye and crown chakra, exhale, relax, listen to Om (or imagine that you hear it) and be still in the silence. Contemplate omnipresence, then pure existence-being.

Individualized consciousness is modified by what it observes.
A mind with its various capacities exists to serve the Self.
The mistaken sense of Self disappears when distinctions
between modified states of consciousness, the energetic
influences of sattwa guna, and one's pure essence are seen.
– Patanjali's Yoga-Sutras 4:23,24,25

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Read them at least once each year and be able to explain the philosophical concepts. (QP) indicates quality paperback.

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Tel: 706-782-4723 weekdays 8 a.m. – 3 p.m. Fax: 706-782-4560
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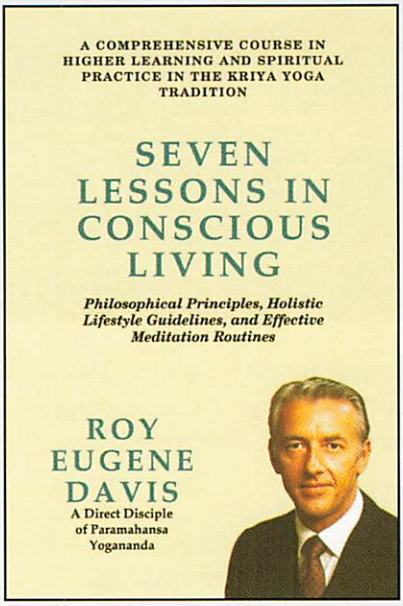
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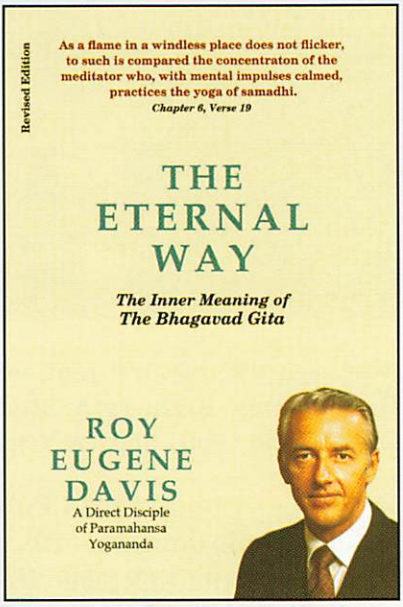
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As a flame in a windless place does not flicker, to such is compared the concentraton of the meditator who, with mental impulses calmed, practices the yoga of samadhi.
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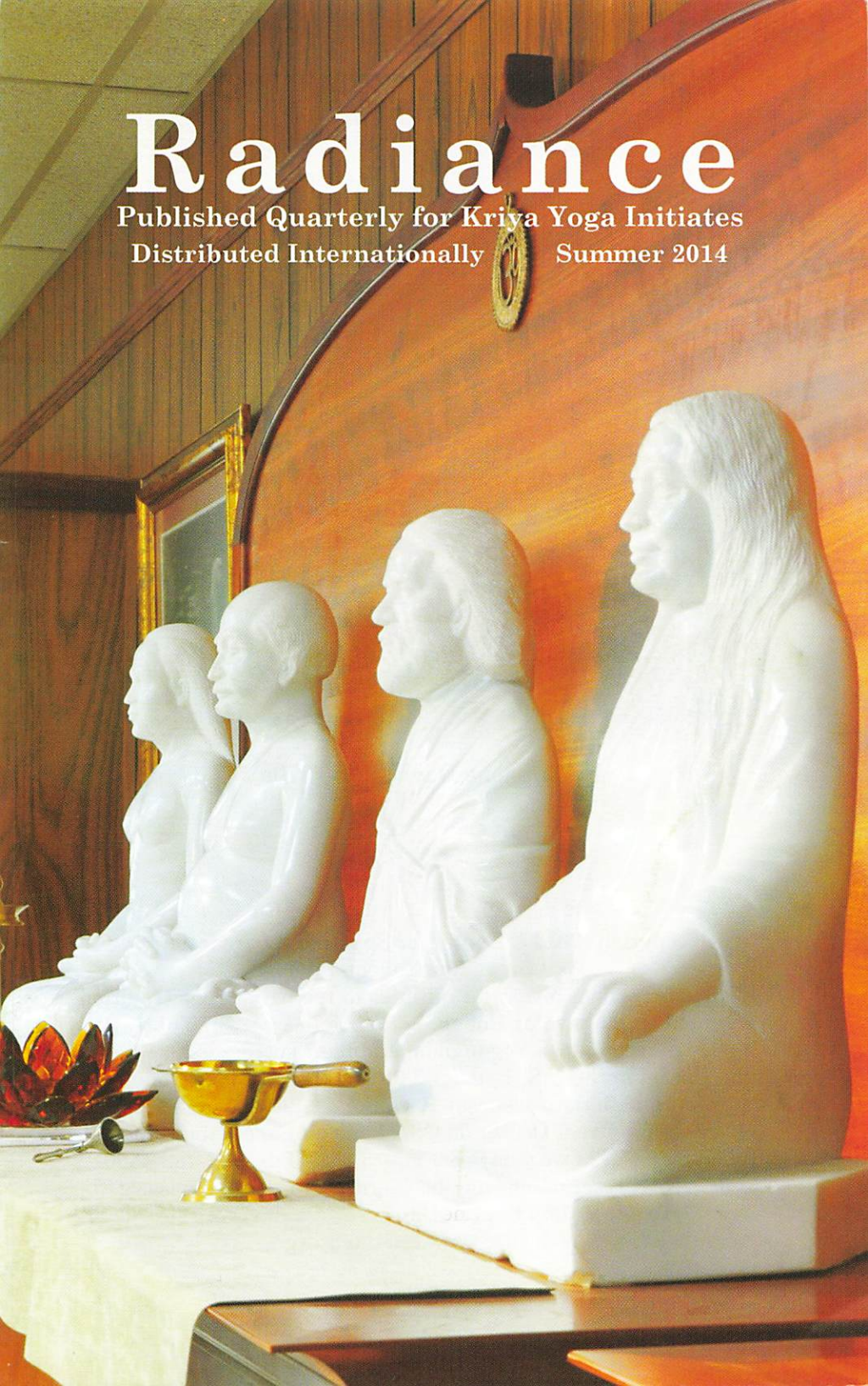

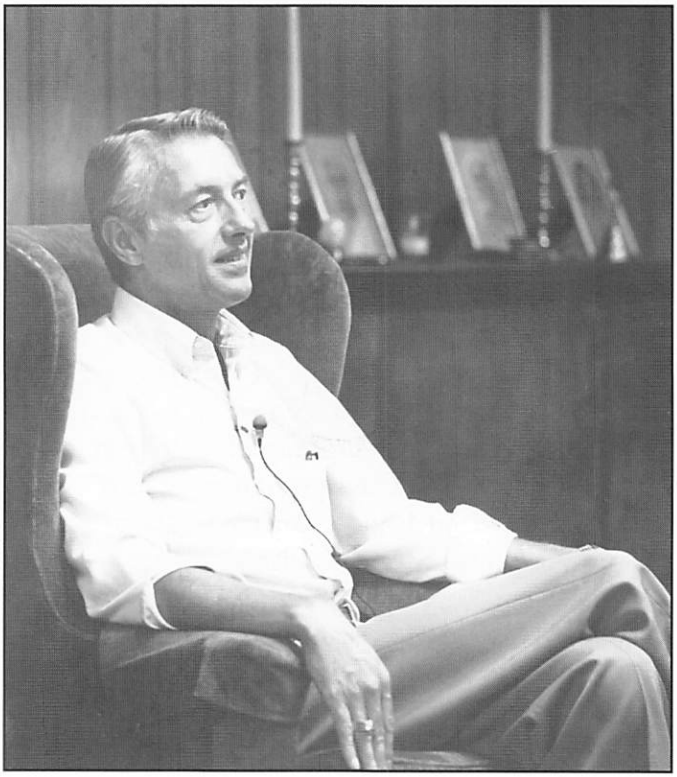

Roy Eugene Davis, late 1970s

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Don't waste time in idle talk.
Silence is the altar of Spirit.
– Paramahansa Yogananda (1893 – 1952)

The Enduring Value of Adhering to Fundamental Philosophical Studies and Effective Spiritual Practices

In 1920, when Paramahansa Yogananda was preparing to depart from India to come to America, Sri Yukteswar told him to teach "the Kriya Yoga of Patanjali." Patanjali wrote the Yoga-Sutras two thousand years ago to describe practices that had been used for centuries. Although my guru talked about Patanjali's text, he did not write a comprehensive commentary on it.

Patanjali emphasized Raja (royal) Yoga, also referred to as eight-limbed Yoga: morality; disciplined living; sitting to meditate; pranayama (extension of inhalation, exhalation, and the natural pauses); introversion of attention; concentration; meditation; samadhi. The moral guidelines are harmlessness, truthfulness, honest behaviors, conservation and constructive use of vital forces, and avoidance of greedy thoughts and actions. The intentional disciplines are cultivation of cleanliness, inner contentment, constructive thinking and behaviors, profound Self-inquiry (study and meditation), and complete surrender (giving up) of all self-centered interests and actions in order to realize (experience and know) ultimate Reality (God).

Sutras are concisely presented "threads" of ideas or themes which can be remembered and examined until insight emerges. This was a practical teaching method before the printing press was invented. When handwritten copies of texts were made, people who wrote them could make changes or add their own opinions, which was often done. When information given by a knowledgeable teacher was memorized, it could be permanently impressed in the student's subconscious and be influential even when the student was not always aware of it. Taking truth teachings into our consciousness and contemplating, comprehending, and experiencing them is liberating.

The following four sutras illustrate how Patanjali explained philosophical concepts and spiritual realizations:

> Interactions between the expressive aspect of ultimate Reality and primordial Nature cause units of the pure essence of that Reality to be individualized.
> Lack of Self-knowing causes a mistaken (illusional) perception of self-identity.
> When that error in perception is corrected, absolute aloneness (oneness) is realized.
> Unwavering intuitive knowledge of ultimate Reality removes all delusions and illusions.
> – *Yoga-Sutras 2:23 – 26*

Unwavering (constant) *intuitive* knowledge of ultimate Reality is knowledge "about" it that precedes actual realization (experience) of it. It is important that we don't imagine that we are spiritually enlightened because we have intuitive knowledge of our true nature and higher realities that provides insight. That kind of knowledge is helpful, but it is not immediately redemptive or liberating. It does not *restore* us to the Self-knowing we had when we were first individualized and not yet identified with the inertia of the primordial field of Nature, or *free* us from the subjective conditions which limit us.

According to the philosophical concepts that underlie Kriya Yoga practices, units of the pure essence of ultimate Reality become influenced by primordial Nature (Om with characteristics of space, time, and fine cosmic forces), then may become more involved when they are influenced by the inertia of primordial Nature. The inertia of primordial Nature is impersonal; not an intelligent or willful force. Units (souls) of the pure essence of ultimate Reality become involved when a universe is produced so that organic forms can be enlivened and animated.

The real purpose of Kriya Yoga practice is to enable spiritual aspirants to be Self- and God-realized; not merely to have a healthier, happier, or more comfortable human existence. Only a few people (even among kriya initiates) understand this. Fewer still are completely dedicated to being Self- and God-realized in their current incarnation. Many people who say they are

truth seekers are not focused on matters that are essential to their total well-being and spiritual growth, do not study deeply or meditate regularly or superconsciously, and are more inclined to express and gratify their superficial personality inclinations than to cultivate and actualize their innate, divine qualities. Many people who attend my meditation seminars in various cities or meditation retreats here at CSA headquarters seem more interested in social interaction and meeting new friends than being quiet, meditating deeply, and better understanding themselves and their relationship with the Infinite. Many view Center for Spiritual Awareness as a mere teaching endeavor no different from dozens of other organizations rather than as a vital spiritual enlightenment movement deeply rooted in an ancient tradition. Some request initiation, then don't diligently practice the meditation techniques or soon want to learn other methods.

Some symptoms of a dysfunctional human condition result from arrested emotional growth as indicated by an inability or unwillingness to be responsible for mental attitudes, emotional states, choices, actions, and reactions to events or situations.

How to Be a Dedicated Disciple On the Kriya Yoga Spiritual Path

For *discipleship* to be of real value, one must learn what is necessary to learn, allow knowledge to banish ignorance, adopt helpful lifestyle regimens, and adhere to a regular schedule of meditation and other effective practices that allow spiritual growth to naturally occur.

> Kriya Yoga is practiced to weaken and remove afflictions and to cultivate samadhi.
> – *Yoga-Sutras 2:2*

Afflictions are physical or psychological conditions that cause pain, discomfort, or other kinds of distress that may confine or distort our awareness. Weakening and removing them allows us to be more aware and freely functional, meditate effectively, and cultivate samadhi (firm holding together of our attention and awareness with our pure essence). The samadhi of Self-realiza-

tion may be realized during introspective meditation or at any time when we have a change of viewpoint from an egocentric condition to conscious Self-awareness.

Many physical or psychological conditions that are painful, discomforting, or only somewhat troublesome can be removed by well-informed intentional actions, constructive thinking and living, and behavior modification (doing what we know is best to do rather than allowing debilitating habits to determine how we think, feel, and behave).

Just as most people can live more effectively by choosing to do it, most spiritual aspirants can awaken more quickly when they sincerely want to do it and intentionally conform their thoughts and actions to their sincere desire.

> When all thoughts and actions are fully conformed
> to one's aspiration to be Self-realized, physical,
> mental, and spiritual strength is acquired.
> – *Yoga-Sutras 2:38*

When I was very young, I wanted to be spiritually awake and knew I would be. When I was with Paramahansa Yogananda, he always reminded, and encouraged, me to constantly aspire to be Self-realized and to think and live in ways that would allow that realization to emerge. I listened to what he said and carefully observed him. He always spoke with intention, was always mentally and emotionally calm, and was always alert and aware. When I was with him (and learned to attune my mind and consciousness with his) I was aware of an omnipotent, omniscient presence.

Even when we are as attentive to doing what we know is helpful to nurture our spiritual awakening, it does not always quickly occur. Knowing this, we can perhaps understand why it is difficult for spiritual growth to occur when mental confusion, emotional unrest, purposeless behaviors, or apathy are allowed to blur our awareness and produce or attract discordant situations and experiences.

Our faith that we will have our spiritual destiny fulfilled by being spiritually enlightened should not be allowed to waver.

faith 1. Confident belief in the truth, value, or trustworthiness of an idea, person, or thing. 2. Belief that is not always based on material evidence or logical proof. 3. Spiritual conviction.

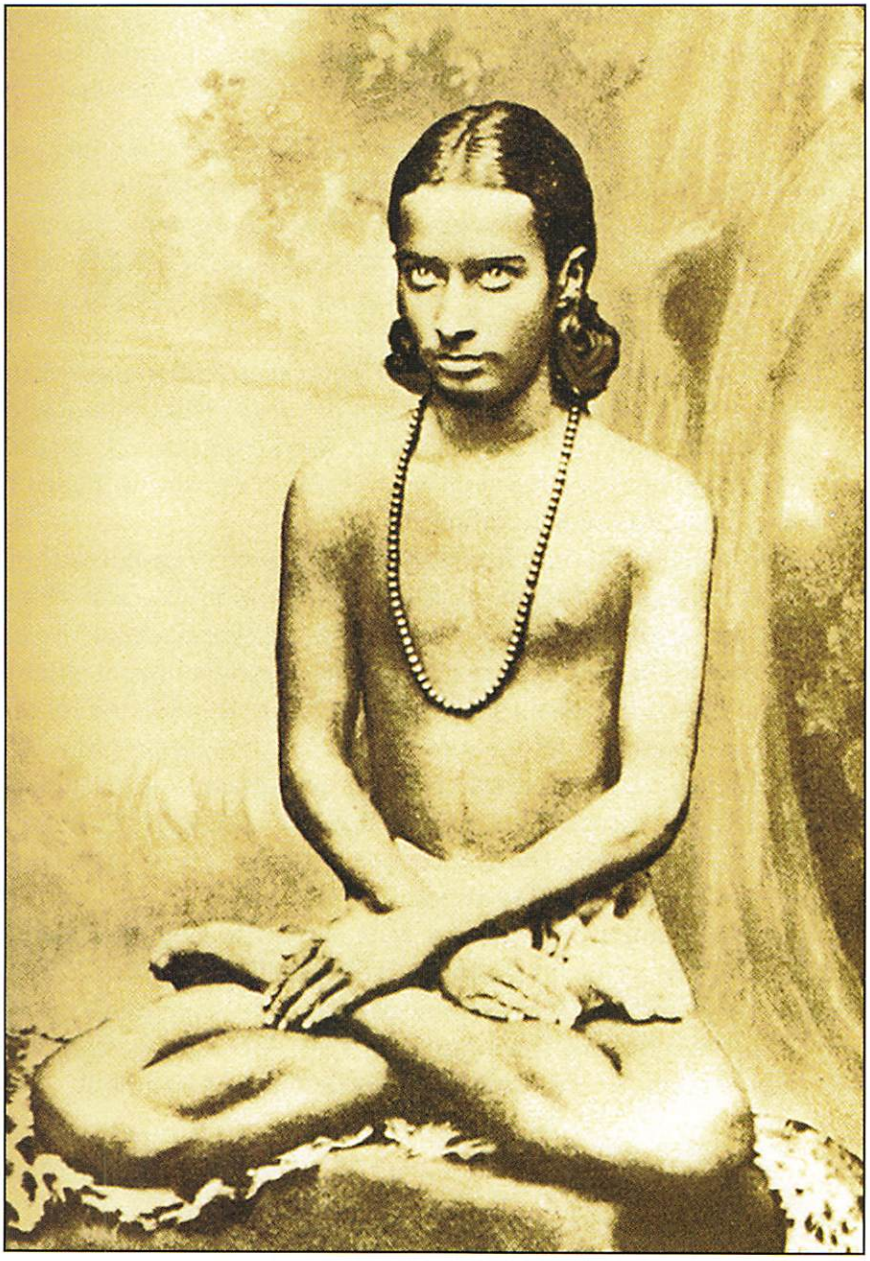
Spiritual conviction constantly inspired by intuitive awareness of your true nature and higher realities is the best kind of faith because it will enable you to be Self-reliant. Although knowing about enlightened people past and present can be helpful, only your enlightenment can illumine your mind and permanently free you from limiting conditions.

When you privately think about your true nature, you can intuitively know that you are an immortal spiritual being and destined to be fully Self-realized. You don't have to ask others for their opinions, which would be worthless for you to hear or consider. You can know for yourself.

A few spiritually enlightened people experienced natural or effortless awakening to Self- and God-realization. It is more common that a person who aspires to be spiritually conscious has to devote some right endeavor to metaphysical study, improvement of mental and intellectual powers, attitude and behavior modification, and superconscious meditation practice as preparation for transcendent realization. Helpful preliminary procedures (*kriyas*, cleansing, purifying actions) help to make the mind and awareness receptive to the emergence of innate knowledge. *(See again Yoga-Sutras 2:2, this article, page 5.)*

Because of much information that is readily available about the facts of life or how to wisely live and effectively meditate, sincere truth seekers cannot honestly say that they don't know how to nurture their spiritual growth. Any person who sincerely wants to awaken to illumination of consciousness can do it.

The mind is the connection between the Self and the senses.
The body is a holy temple. God as soul is the indwelling deity.
One who is enlightened knows this.
– Lahiri Mahasaya (1828 – 1895)



The teenaged Mukunda Lal Ghosh who later
became Swami (and Paramahansa) Yogananda
Early 1900s

Readers are invited to provide questions, inquiries, and themes which may be used in future issues. By letter or e-mail **rd@csa-davis.org**

It is easy for me to accept the idea that I am a spiritual being. It has not been easy to actually experience my true nature and think and live from that awareness.

Awakening to Self-knowing usually occurs gradually. It can also occur in a series of awakenings or, more rarely, in a sudden, unexpected moment of immediate discovery. Constantly nurturing inner awareness of your pure essence will encourage its qualities to emerge.

How is it possible to be Self-realized while being involved in accomplishing purposes, fulfilling duties, effectively interacting with others, and relating to events and circumstances?

It is possible by being Self-knowing, mentally and emotionally peaceful, insightfully objective, and skillfully appropriate in relationships, actions, and responses to situations. See mundane events and conditions as causes and effects in space and time. Attend to duties and perform actions without mental or emotional attachment to what you do or to the effects of your thoughts and actions.

Meditation is pleasant but makes me so peaceful and passive that I am not as interested in attending to duties as I need to be. How can I solve this problem?

Meditate to peacefully experience pure consciousness, then think and act decisively to accomplish purposes of value. Don't allow moods or laziness to strongly influence your thinking or behaviors. Clearly know what you want to (or must) do and do it well.

The yogi established in "inner knowledge" by the practice of yoga kriyas is no longer affected by external circumstances.
– Swami Sri Yukteswar (1855 – 1936)

I have been almost daily practicing kriya pranayama. Should I now learn advanced kriya meditation methods?

You can calm your mind and elicit superconsciousness with the meditation methods you now have. The so-called advanced kriya techniques are not necessary. The final result of effective meditation practice is complete mental and emotional calmness that allows pure consciousness to be experienced. That can also be accomplished with simple breath observation and/or mantra as well as with kriya pranayama.

If intricate meditation methods were necessary, my guru would have recommended them. He often told us that the basic methods, effectively used, were sufficient.

I receive e-mails from individuals who learn about kriya meditation techniques that are published or talked about on the Internet. They ask which are "authentic" or were taught by Lahiri Mahasaya. The most helpful meditation techniques are learned from a knowledgeable yoga teacher or an enlightened person who is also a competent teacher.

Initiation into an authentic Kriya Yoga tradition can be of great help if the new initiate is completely dedicated to his or her spiritual practices.

A few years ago, some Kriya Yoga teachers in India said that Paramahansa Yogananda simplified the practice of the meditation techniques to accommodate people in America. He allowed American disciples to sit a chair to meditate and didn't publicly teach Sanskrit mantras or perform elaborate rituals. He taught the basic practices that produce ideal results.

Recently, some Indian and American yoga teachers are explaining kriya pranayama and other meditation techniques on the Internet. According to Lahiri Mahasaya, Babaji said that instruction in kriya meditation methods without initiation followed by sincere commitment to practice is only information.

Serene, fearless, self-controlled, with mental impulses subdued, contemplating the supreme Reality, the devotee should sit, devoted to the highest realization.
– The Bhagavad Gita 6:14

I am depressed and have feelings of guilt and shame because of unresolved emotional conflicts associated with past bad choices and unwise behaviors. How can I overcome this condition?

Past actions cannot be changed; your thoughts and feelings about them can be changed. Mild thoughts and feelings of guilt and shame indicate that your conscience (innate sense of what is right or wrong) is "telling" you how to think and behave. If you can amend (correct) wrong actions that you performed or distressing situations that you created without causing further hardship to others, do it. Avoid making similar mistakes.

Replace sad moods and depressed feelings with optimistic thoughts and constructive feelings, and be constructively purposeful. Maintain a wholesome lifestyle for physical and psychological well-being.

Because you are a spiritual being, you are superior to your thoughts, moods, and actions. Prove to yourself that you can be wisely decisive, mentally competent, and emotionally mature by actualizing those characteristics.

If professional help is needed, obtain it.

When I was initiated more than twenty years ago I was very enthusiastic and focused on positive goals and spiritual practices. Through the years I have drifted away from the spiritual path several times. I now intend to stay on it. How can I maintain a firm resolve and avoid distractions?

When your sincere desire to be Self-realized is constant, it will be easy to be firmly resolved and to consistently adhere to a holistic lifestyle and spiritual practices. When your thoughts and actions are focused on matters that you consider to be of major importance, your attention cannot be distracted.

The most beneficial practice to maintain is daily superconscious meditation. Daily meditation will confirm your sincerity and bring forth your innate qualities. People who say that they cannot meditate daily because they don't have time to do it or cannot meditate effectively, are not sincerely dedicated to their spiritual path.

Why should we surrender to God? And how can we do it?

In Patanjali's Yoga-Sutras, transcending a mistaken sense of self-identity by surrendering it to God is stated in the first chapter (sutra 23) as a direct way to Self-realization and in the first verse of the second chapter as one of the essential *kriyas* (intentional actions) to be used to clarify awareness and enable superconsciousness to be cultivated.

Patanjali used the Sanskrit word *Iswara* to indicate the expressive aspect of ultimate Reality with attributes because the absolute or pure essence is not involved with the processes of nature. By surrendering our mistaken sense of self-identity to it, we can relate to and experience our "higher or real true self" and then view everything from that perspective.

Actual, sustained experience of our true nature and ultimate Reality dissolves sentimental attachment to the mistaken sense of self and its personality characteristics.

Surrender (letting go) of ideas, feelings, habits, and actions that restrict and confine our awareness and circumstances may not always be easy. During meditation, practice detaching your attention from your personality-based sense of self. Imagine that you are a free, alert, perceptive spiritual being—that you are omnipresent, more identified with the expressive aspect of ultimate Reality than with ordinary thoughts and conditions.

After meditating, sincerely endeavor to think and live like a wise, free being even when some former thoughts, feelings, and inclinations have yet to be completely overcome. Don't try to justify negative mental attitudes, moods, or behaviors. Concentrate on the constructive actions that will produce or allow the results you want to have. Persist in the right ways until you are fully Self-realized.

What mystics mean by "doing God's will" is to live in accord with natural laws, cultivate moral mental attitudes and behaviors by thinking and doing what is right or proper, be wisely intentional and productive, nurture spiritual growth, and compassionately help others to know their true nature and awaken to spiritual enlightenment.

What are some of the causes of lack of spiritual awakening and incomplete spiritual awakening?

Not everyone has the ability to learn and do what needs to be done to allow spiritual awakening to occur. They can benefit by nurturing aspiration to be spiritually conscious and learning how to improve intellectual powers and functional skills.

Among people who have the ability to learn to do what they need to do, a few are intentional enough to follow through and have some constructive results, but they don't enthusiastically persist long enough to be proficient in experiencing refined and transcendent meditative superconsciousness. Some are able to elicit meditative superconsciousness but seldom go beyond the stage of experiencing superconsciousness mixed with thoughts, emotions, and mind-produced perceptions. Or, although they can have refined and fleeting transcendent meditative experiences, they cling to erroneous ideas and opinions when they are not meditating. Although their meditative insights may be authentic, at other times they don't always skillfully use discriminative intelligence when they think or talk about higher realities.

Many people awaken to the extent they have a little understanding of higher realities and are satisfied with it, or mistakenly think that they are Self- and God-realized and neglect their metaphysical studies and spiritual practices. Or decide to be a spiritual teacher or healer without having the necessary knowledge and abilities.

Effective spiritual practice requires our sincere, completely dedicated participation through the weeks, months, and years until our liberation of consciousness is fully actualized by our right actions (kriyas) and the freely provided impulses of grace that arise from within us and can be expressive in the various processes of nature and in the course of human events.

It is helpful to remember that we dwell in a universe: a whole manifestation of cosmic forces pervaded by a universal mind and enlivened by the spirit (life) of God (ultimate Reality).

The same God that is in me, is in you!
– Paramahansa Yogananda (1893 – 1952)

Although I have regularly meditated for several years, I do not yet see the "spiritual eye" or any other subjective manifestations of light. My awareness is more clear and I think rationally.

You are having positive results. Some people say they can see an inner light; many say they don't see it. Many spiritually awake people don't see light when they meditate. I have known many people who said they were aware of light during meditation who were not very intelligent, wise, or emotionally mature. Meditative perceptions of inner light and/or pleasant sensations may be interesting but are not of spiritual value if they don't enhance our Self- and God-knowing.

Should initiates be mission-motivated? Should we endeavor to inform others about Kriya Yoga philosophy and practices?

We should be willing to share information with people who are sincerely interested without trying to persuade or convert them. It is usually best to avoid lengthy conversations. Some ways to share information are with our literature, an audio recording, or our web site. Let people make their own choices.

According to Sri Yukteswar's view of cosmic cycles, we are in the early stage of a 2,400 year era during which intellectual capacities of people are increasing, enabling them to better understand higher realities and be interested in spirituality.

Because we are still only in the early stage of the current cycle of intellectual and spiritual awakening, many conditions in our world need to be confronted and improved. Most of the following numbers are estimated:

- The global human population is a little more than 7 billion people. A 3 billion increase is expected by 2050.
- Each year, 140 million people are born; 380 thousand a day. Population growth is slowing in some parts of the world.
- Each year, 55 million die; 150 thousand a day. Numbers will increase as the population ages.
- 1 billion people are illiterate—unable to read or write. A little more than a billion are living in conditions of *absolute poverty* on less than the equivalent of $1 daily.

- A 2012 census report indicated a United States population of 350 million, of which 230 million are adults, an increasing number are over 65 years of age. If one person among one thousand adults in North America practiced Kriya Yoga, there could be a quarter of million initiates. The population of the U.S. is about 5 percent of the global population. If one person among a thousand adults in the world were attracted to Kriya Yoga practices, there could be more than 5 million initiates.

  Millions of people who are sincerely interested in well-being and spirituality are attracted to other effective ways of nurturing their spiritual growth.

Spring Radiance Newsletter corrections.

Page 3, last paragraph, first sentence should read:

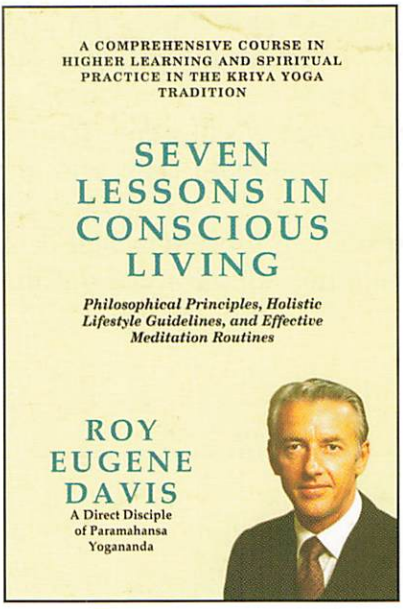
The Sanskrit words *prana* and *apana* indicate aspects of life force that govern inhalation and exhalation, respectively.

Note: *Prana* regulates breathing, *apana* is associated with removal of waste products from the body.

Page 5, last paragraph, first sentence should read:

To be impervious to influences that may modify mental states and awareness, improve your ability to discriminate (know the difference) between yourself as an unchanging witness and your mental states and states of consciousness.

Basic Books to Read and Recommend to Friends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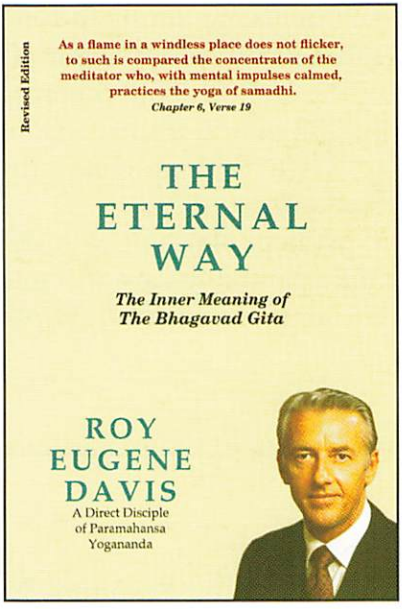
ROY EUGENE DAVIS
A Direct Disciple of Paramahansa Yogananda


Revised Edition
As a flame in a windless place does not flicker, to such is compared the concentraton of the meditator who, with mental impulses calmed, practices the yoga of samadhi.
Chapter 6, Verse 19
THE ETERNAL WAY
The Inner Meaning of The Bhagavad Gita
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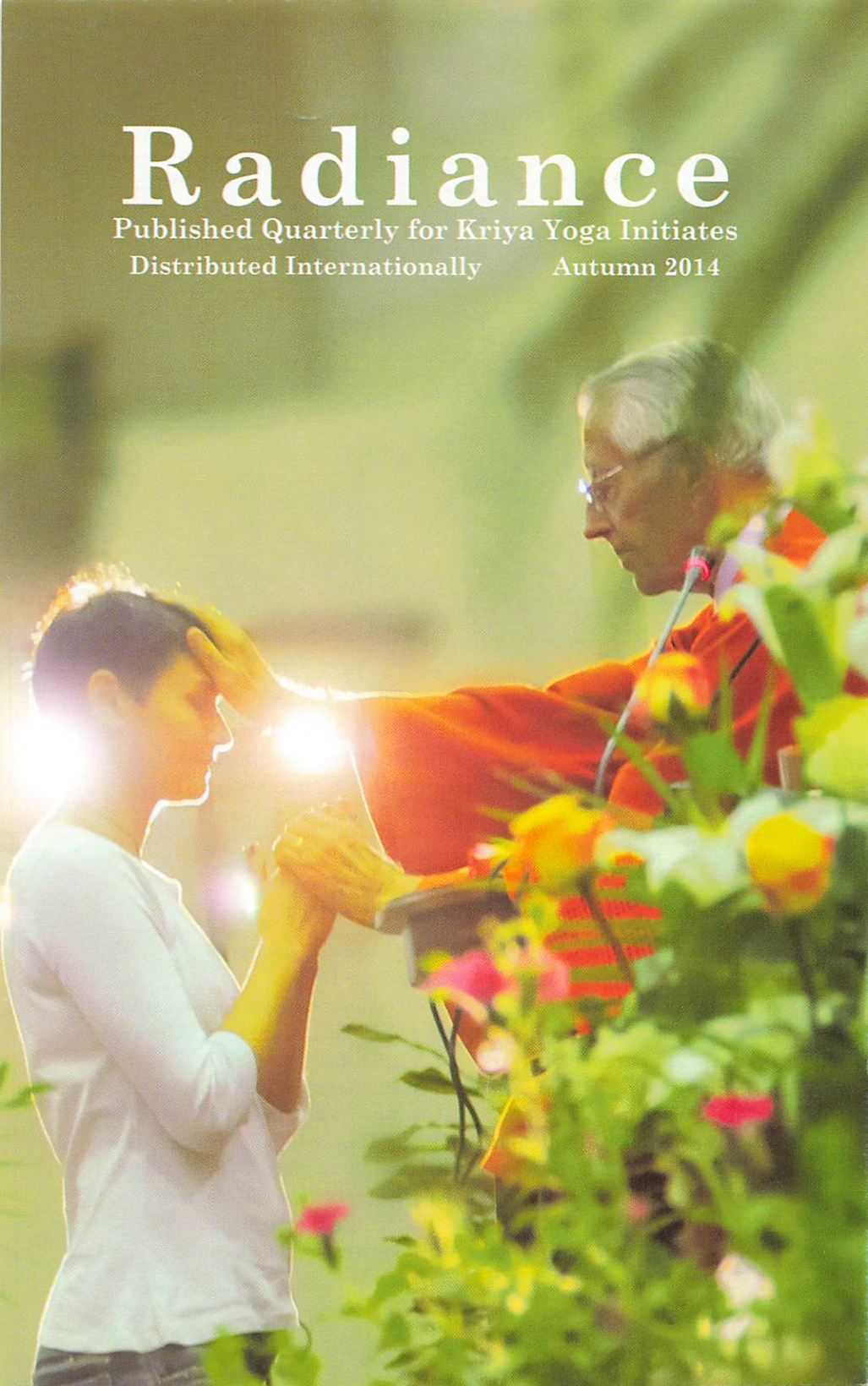

Roy Eugene Davis with young YMCA members.
The photo was published in a daily newspaper
to publicize a special public program sponsored
by the Phoenix, Arizona, SRF Center in 1951.

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Offices and Retreat Center on CSA Lane off Lake Rabun Road, Lakemont.
Tel: 706-782-4723 weekdays 8 a.m. – 3 p.m. Fax: 706-782-4560
For retreat reservations and book orders: info@csa-davis.org
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I sow the seeds of my desires in the ethers [space with fine cosmic forces pervaded by universal mind] and they must come into manifestation!
– Paramahansa Yogananda (1893 – 1952)

Inspired Intention and Firm Faith Can Produce and Attract Constructive Results

Some spiritual aspirants are reluctant to have specific desires or to use will power to have them fulfilled. They say that they don't want to create any more karma or have egocentric self-will that may be in conflict with "God's will."

Ideas or opinions about "God's will" are often described in general terms regarding what is good to do, cause to happen, or have. When we are inspired (influenced by our pure essence) to accomplish purposes, egocentric influences are absent.

When we desire to have our innate urge to be Self- and God-realized fulfilled and are inclined to be agents of good in the world, we should not wonder if our desire or inclination is "God's will." We should act with intention and firm faith (pure conviction) to do what can allow ideal results to occur.

What are Your Major Purposes to Accomplish and Personal Duties to Skillfully Perform?

Are you conscious of having major (of greater importance) purposes to accomplish and duties to skillfully perform rather than to live as people whose consciousness is ordinary (modified and blurred) may be inclined to do? (We shouldn't judge others who don't seem to be interested in spirituality; they may be working through conditions which may enable them to improve their functional abilities and bring forth their innate qualities.)

Concentrate on accomplishing your major purpose and performing necessary and chosen duties and you will always be enthusiastic, optimistic, energetic, and serenely joyous. Neglect them and you may be pessimistic, lethargic, and unhappy.

Your primary (first in order of importance) purpose is to be Self-realized. While nurturing your spiritual growth, you can en-

deavor to accomplish all of your other major purposes. Working selflessly to accomplish them will enable forces that empower evolutionary processes to express through you and your spiritual growth will occur more quickly.

Paramahansa Yogananda told me and some other disciples that when we cooperate with the constructive trends occurring in the world, we are carried long with them. He sometimes told us that he had often experienced occasions of unplanned good fortune because he was fully dedicated to his major purposes: 1) to widely teach Kriya Yoga principles and practices; 2) to encourage and assist disciples to be spiritually enlightened.

Many of his plans for the growth and outreach of his "work" (as he called it) are still coming into manifestation. Before he left his body (March 7, 1952) he told the board of directors of Self-Realization Fellowship to widely advertise his book *Autobiography of a Yogi*; establish permanent temples and meditation centers in the United States and other countries; and train many teachers. *Autobiography of a Yogi* is now published in 34 languages, temples and meditation centers are in several regions of the United States and other countries, and ministers present classes and initiations throughout the world.

In 1951, Master told me that James J. Lynn (to whom he had given the name Rajarsi Janakananda) had donated money for SRF to buy property above their new Lake Shrine in Pacific Palisades, California, to protect the privacy of the Shrine and to serve as a future place for a temple. The beautiful, large temple was constructed and dedicated forty years later.

A new documentary film, *AWAKE: The Life of Yogananda*, was made during the past few years. It was shown at film festivals in Sedona, Arizona; Maui, Hawaii; and Seattle, Washington; and elsewhere a few months ago and will be in theaters in major cities soon (perhaps now). When I met the producers a few years ago in San Jose, California, I was told that they were independent but had the support of SRF. At that time, they had been to India to film some places where Master had lived and taught. The multi-million dollar project was anonymously funded.

It was not easy for Master to do everything he wanted to do during the 1930s and 40s. There was a financial depression and a world war, Yoga was not widely known or understood, and only a few people who were attracted by his writings and lectures became dedicated disciples or had the potential to be efficient helpers or competent teachers. In India, some of his brother disciples, and others who he designated as teachers at his residential school for boys and as coordinators of organizational activities, either didn't understand his world vision or disagreed with it. His mission-purposes, however, were clearly defined in his mind and consciousness and his enthusiasm for having them actualized did not waver.

When we know our major purposes, we can accept the help of others who want to assist us while wisely using our creative abilities and relying on our "invisible" means of support and provision. What we can creatively imagine and believe to be possible within the realm of natural laws of cause and effect can be manifested. Imagination, intention, and conviction can keep us inspired and motivated and produce and attract ideal events and circumstances.

Many people who can easily use imagination, intention, and conviction to be successful in ordinary ventures are not always satisfied with the results of their actions. To gratify egocentric desires or whims, constantly stimulate the mind and senses, or strive to emulate the lifestyle or behaviors of people who are not spiritually awake, will result in unhappiness unless better choices are made when the futility of superficial thinking and behavior is recognized.

If you don't yet know the major purposes that you can or should endeavor to accomplish, ask for guidance. Regardless of to whom or what you direct your request, the answer will come from within you or events will occur to provide opportunities to learn and to proceed with confidence. Some of your major purposes may be to assist or cooperate with worthy projects that are already organized by others and that you know or believe to be of value.

PARAMAHANSA YOGANANDA
Hollywood, California, SRF Temple, early 1940s

Imagination, Intention, Conviction, and Right Actions (Kriyas) Can Greatly Quicken Our Spiritual Growth

Many truth seekers (and kriya initiates) don't experience satisfying spiritual growth (the emergence of innate qualities and Self- and God-knowledge) because they don't imagine that they can, haven't decisively intended to do it, lack firm faith or conviction, or don't do what is necessary to allow it to occur.

Spiritual [growth] progress is determined by the intensiveness [concentrated endeavor] of [right] practice, whether mild, medium, or very intensive (*Patanjali's Yoga-Sutra 1:22*)

Right practice should include doing everything that can be helpful. Practicing meditation methods with a weak resolve to be enlightened, or not believing we can be enlightened, will seldom result in insights because we will not be receptive to them.

At public lectures and during private talks with disciples, Master invariably emphasized the importance of fervent desire to be Self-realized supported by firm faith, right thinking and living, and regular, deep meditation. When I visited him, as our time together was about to end and he blessed me, he would remind me to "stay in tune with him." Constant mental and spiritual attunement with him enabled me to constantly be in mental and spiritual attunement with our lineage of gurus and receptive to apprehending the wholeness of ultimate Reality.

When Master told disciples to be in harmony him, he also reminded them to direct their devotion to God.

A few weeks before Master passed, when talking informally with a few disciples, he quietly said, "I vanquished Yogananda [the sense of egocentric being and personality] long ago; only God dwells here [in the mind and body] now."

Being with him during such intimate occasions and having him confide in us about private matters and his transcendent perceptions helped to prepare us for his departure. Before he left the world, he was already detached from it.

All sincere truth seekers, especially Kriya Yoga initiates, should endeavor to quickly outgrow small-minded, emotionally dependent mental attitudes and behaviors. They will then be inclined to think rationally, be wisely decisive, and responsible for

their mental states, states of consciousness, actions, and the circumstances they create or attract. They will avoid fantasy and discard false ideas about God (ultimate Reality).

Ask yourself: Do I want to be fully, spiritually awake in my current incarnation? If you are undecided or the answer is "no," think about the matter more seriously. If the answer is "yes," immediately assume constructive mental attitudes, emotional states, and ways of talking and acting. Eliminate, or greatly reduce activities that don't contribute to your well-being.

If you need physical, mental, or emotional healing or have been addicted to harmful or nonuseful relationships, behaviors, substances, or habits, do what is necessary to be permanently healed and freely functional.

Because you are an immortal spiritual being, you will eventually be spiritually enlightened (completely conscious of your true nature and of ultimate Reality and its processes). Knowing this, why not aspire now to be fully awake and forever free—and go forward in the right ways with firm faith?

Knowing the constructive influence of expectation, expect to have satisfying spiritual growth. Anticipate having it. Happily look forward to having it. Mental attitudes will be optimistic, emotions will be positive, behaviors will be ideal, lifestyle regimens will be easily maintained, metaphysical studies will be insightful, and meditations will be illuminating.

To succeed in our worthwhile endeavors and progressively awaken through the stages of authentic spiritual growth, it is necessary to stay focused on our purposes and not let ourselves be mentally or emotionally disturbed by external events, subconscious influences, or the opinions or actions of others. The most helpful things we can do to stay focused on our spiritual path and accomplish all of our major purposes are to nourish our mind with constructive ideas and meditate daily to abide in superconscious Self- and God-awareness.

Meditation results in Self-revelation.
– Lahiri Mahasaya (1828 – 1895)

Maintain a Daily Superconscious Meditation Schedule

We should emulate the behaviors of spiritually enlightened people who daily remove their attention and awareness from external conditions and consciously abide in their pure essence.

I am sometimes surprised when I ask a group of truth seekers if they meditate every day and only a few of them say they do. Some say meditating is not easy to do; they don't have extra time to do it; their home or neighborhood isn't quiet; they don't always feel like doing it; or they haven't had good enough results to keep them motivated to practice. Some people admit that they "forget" to meditate or are lazy.

When you sit to meditate, remember that the purpose for doing it is to experience superconsciousness, then Self-knowing or realization. Preliminary perceptions should not be allowed to distract our attention from our ultimate (highest) aim.

If meditation flows easily when you begin, don't interfere with it by using a meditation technique. Use a form of practice (silent prayer, affirmation, mantra, kriya pranayama, or what is useful to refresh your practice) later if you notice that your attention isn't focused or you are not alert.

If meditation doesn't immediately flow easily, use a form of practice or a technique to begin, then patiently sit in the deep silence when your mind is very calm and your awareness is very clear. Listen to Om (or imagine you hear it) filling all space. Contemplate the source of Om, the expressive field of ultimate Reality, and put your attention on it. Finally, detach your attention from the expressive field of ultimate Reality and contemplate pure-existence-being.

Meditate every day with keen interest in what you perceive and experience. Be curious about what might be revealed while not being anxious or unduly concerned about day to day results of meditation. When meditating does not seem to be productive or your comprehension of higher realities is not as complete as you would like it to be, remember that regardless of relative conditions, one Reality always exists around you and its pure essence *is* you.

Mental and emotional peace may be cultivated by being happy for the well-being of others, compassionate toward those who have misfortune, and disinterested regarding what is not important. Permanent peace can prevail by awakening to Self- and God-realization.
– Swami Sri Yukteswar (1855 – 1936)

Kriya Yoga Philosophy, Traditions & Practices

Questions, inquiries, and themes which may be used in future issues are invited. By letter or e-mail **rd@csa-davis.org**

What do you advise new kriya initiates to do?

This advice is suitable for everyone on their right spiritual path. 1. Learn about ultimate Reality, your true nature, and laws or principles of cause and effect; how to live effectively; and how to nurture your spiritual growth. 2. Diligently practice what you learn. 3. Patiently persist until you are Self-realized.

Our "right spiritual path" is the course of actions that is best suited to our psychological temperament and needs that enables us to most quickly awaken to Self-realization.

When we know we are on the right course in life, we should stay on it until we have the results we aspire to have. Though we may be informed about many things, philosophical ideas, and effective meditation methods, it is best to use what will bring forth our innate qualities and knowledge most easily and quickly.

Being distracted from one's right spiritual path to explore something new or different because of curiosity, restlessness, or boredom can delay or interfere with spiritual growth.

Ask: How many more years will I be in this world? And: Am I doing all that I know to do to nurture my spiritual growth and be enlightened to the extent of liberation of consciousness?

Conditional or qualified liberation is Self-realization while a residue of subconscious influences with the potential to activate mental or emotional conditions that may blur awareness, and a few erroneous ideas, remain. Absolute liberation is complete purification of the mind and awareness.

Don't go [awaken] only halfway, two thirds of the way, or almost to Self-realization, and then stop. Go all the way!
– Paramahansa Yogananda (1893 – 1952)

Why is it so difficult for some people to do what is necessary to be spiritually enlightened even when they know what to do to nurture their spiritual awakening?

Many people, even among those who are well-educated and altruistic, are so strongly identified with mental and emotional states, personality characteristics, confined sense of Self-identity, habits of thinking and behavior, and with friends and associates who share many of their views, that it is difficult for them to think and act differently.

Among people who are attracted to spiritual practices, some are insecure, lack self-esteem and self-confidence, and want to have an infantile concept of—and relationship with—a spiritual teacher (guru) and/or God and may want to retain traditional religious ideas or false beliefs about messiahs, avatars, reincarnation, or evil influences.

Many people view their spiritual path as being of secondary importance, to think about or experiment with when they are not busy with ordinary activities.

When I practice kriya pranayama, my attention is seldom completely focused while I regulate my breathing and somewhat feel a current of energy moving in the spine. How can I improve my practice?

Practice with more inspired intention and endeavor to feel a stronger flow of current in the spine: pull it up with inhalation and let it flow down with exhalation. If doing that doesn't solve the problem, when inhaling and exhaling mentally speak the mantras *hong* and *sau* (saw) or mentally chant Om at each chakra with the ascending and descending currents. I heard my guru recommend this to a disciple who was having trouble concentrating when using Kriya pranayama.

Some people find it helpful to roll the tongue back and up against the roof of the mouth when using kriya pranayama. If

doing this complicates the process and distracts from feeling the current flow in the spine, don't do it.

After kriya pranayama, keep attention in the crown chakra (or the spiritual eye and the crown chakra), detach attention from thoughts and emotions, listen to Om. Imagine omnipresence and contemplate your essence: pure-joyous-existence.

If you sit long enough, alert and very attentive, with your awareness in the front and higher regions of the brain, you will eventually meditate without effort.

If you meditate 30 to 45 minutes each day, at least once a week sit in the silence for 30 minutes to an hour longer after using kriya pranayama or other methods.

Short (15 to 30 minutes) meditation sessions are useful for reducing stress and calming the mind and emotions. Longer, deeper sessions are useful for cultivating transcendent realizations because subliminal impulses that activate movements in the mind and awareness are more likely to be quieted.

When meditating, remember that you are endeavoring to have conditions that allow your mind and emotions to be calm and your awareness clear so that the purity of your essence can be directly realized (experienced and known as it is).

Regularly read the first chapter of Patanjali's Yoga-Sutra in which ways to experience superconsciousness are described. Also read the entire text. My commentary on Patanjali's Sutra is in my books *The Science of Self-Realization* and *A Guide to Kriya Yoga Practice*, CSA Press. In India, it is in my book *The Path of Light* published by Motilal Banarsidass. At their stores in Delhi, Kolkata, Patna, Varanasi, Chennai, Bangalore, Pune, and Mumbai. Website: www.mlbd.com

Symptoms of distracted attention are anxiety, frustration, restless movements of the body, and irregular breathing. To overcome these obstacles [to realization of samadhi] one can meditate on a chosen object or ideal. They may definitely be overcome by practice of pranayama.
– Patanjali's Yoga-Sutra 1:31,32 & 34

What is an ideal lifestyle for a kriya initiate?

Our wholesome lifestyle should nurture and support total well-being:

- Spiritual well-being can be nurtured by acquiring accurate knowledge of higher realities, self-inquiry, and practices that clarify awareness and elicit our innate, divine qualities and Self- and God-knowledge.
- Mental capacities should be highly developed to enable us to perceive accurately, think rationally, and improve powers of creative imagination, will, and intention.
- Emotional stability and peacefulness enable us to live effectively and accomplish purposes that are of enduring value to us and to others.
- Vital physical health and function enables skillful, enjoyable living. Cultivate optimism, emotional maturity, and regular good habits of nutrition, exercise, rest, and recreation.
- Supportive environmental conditions should include fresh air; sunlight; a secure, comfortable abode; harmonious personal relationships; and a continuous supply of material resources to satisfy what is needed or wanted to live well.

Do practical things to have a satisfying lifestyle that assures your total well-being while having conviction that, as you live skillfully and effectively, you always have the full support of the processes of nature, emerging events, and God's grace in all of your constructive endeavors.

Remember that your mental states, states of consciousness, and actions influence the collective consciousness of all life on our planet and in the universe. Choose to influence everyone and everything in a constructive way.

Whatever you do, eat, or give, whatever disciplines
you observe, present as holy offerings to me.
– Bhagavad Gita 9:27

Note: See explanation on the following page.

The Bhagavad Gita is an allegory, a fictional story in which characters, things, and actions represent moral and spiritual principles. Krishna, one of the central characters, represents enlightened consciousness. When he is portrayed as telling his disciple, Arjuna, to surrender everything to him, the meaning is that spiritual aspirants should surrender their thoughts and actions, and even their doubts, confusion and weaknesses, not to an imagined external or supernatural deity, but to their own enlightened consciousness.

The five Pandava brothers represent the characteristics of the five chakras in the spine, from the bottom upward:

1. *Sahadeva:* earth element essence, power of resistance.
2. *Nakula:* water element essence, mental stillness and power to adhere.
3. *Arjuna*: fire element essence, mental purity, energetic self-control, and aspiration to accomplish.
4. *Bhima*: air element essence, control of vital forces, endless strength, formidable.
5. *Yudhisthira*: space element essence, steadfast firmness and discernment.

Draupadi, the wife of the five brothers represents kundalini energies which enliven and interact with the chakras.

Carefully read my Introduction in *The Eternal Way: The Inner Meaning of the Bhagavad Gita*, CSA Press. In India from Motilal Banarsidass. If Sanskrit names are not easily remembered, remember the meanings of names of characters. The actions that are portrayed describe what may occur during a contest between one's spiritual aspirations and capacities to choose and wisely act, and the influences and tendencies of a deluded (modified, conditioned) mind and consciousness.

Improved ability to comprehend the meanings of the *Yoga-Sutra* and the *Bhagavad Gita* through the months and years is a positive indication of your progressively improving powers of perception and discernment.

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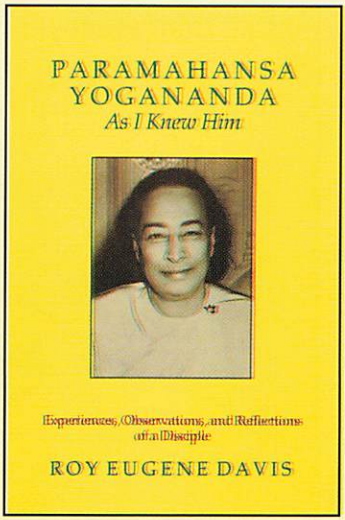

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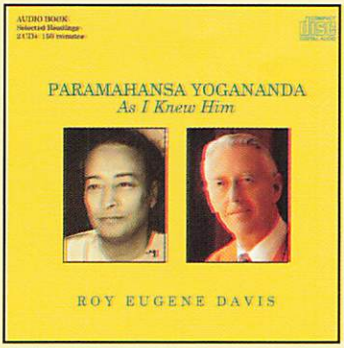

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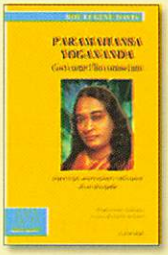

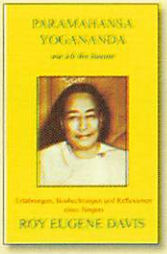

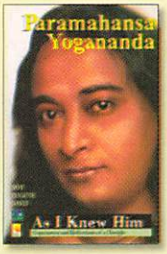

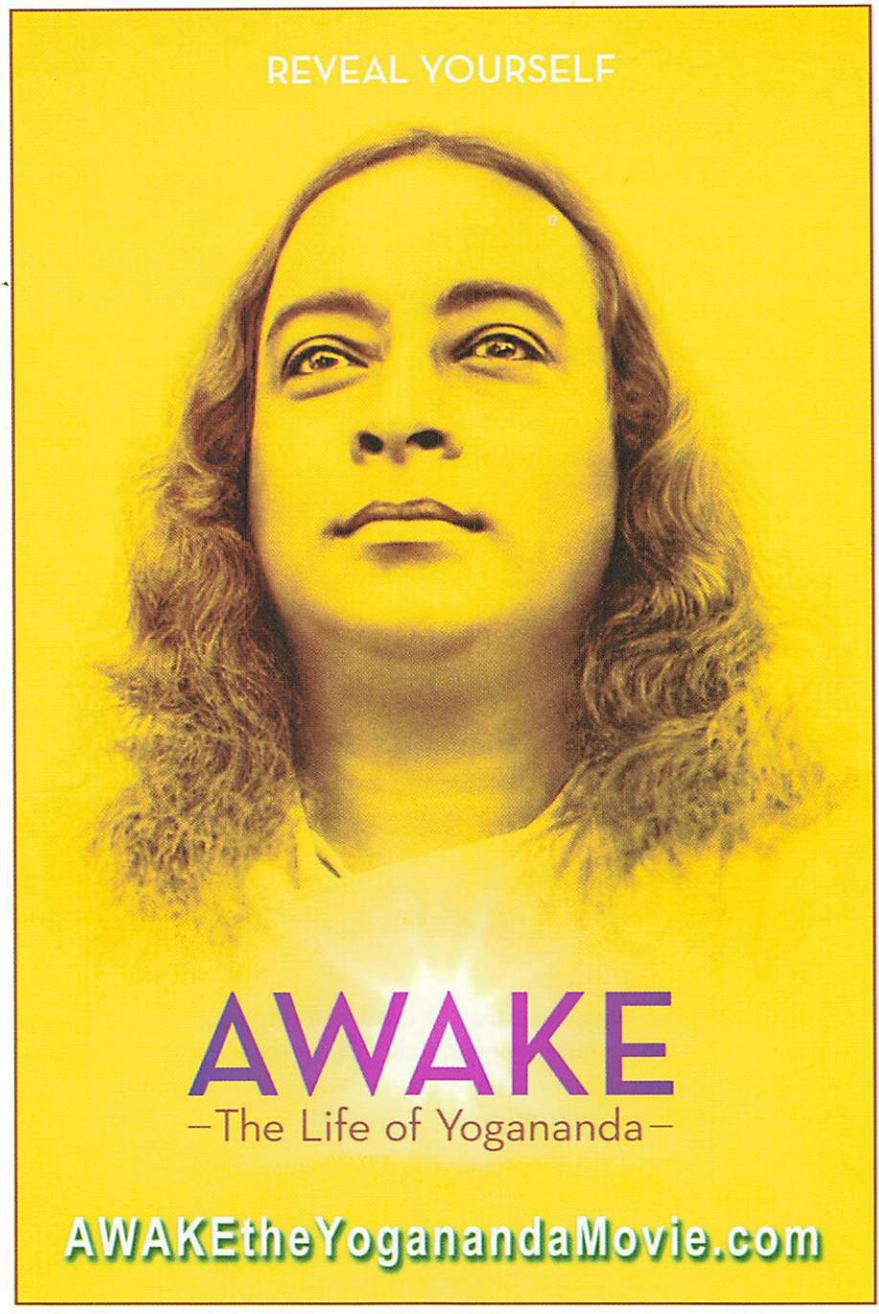

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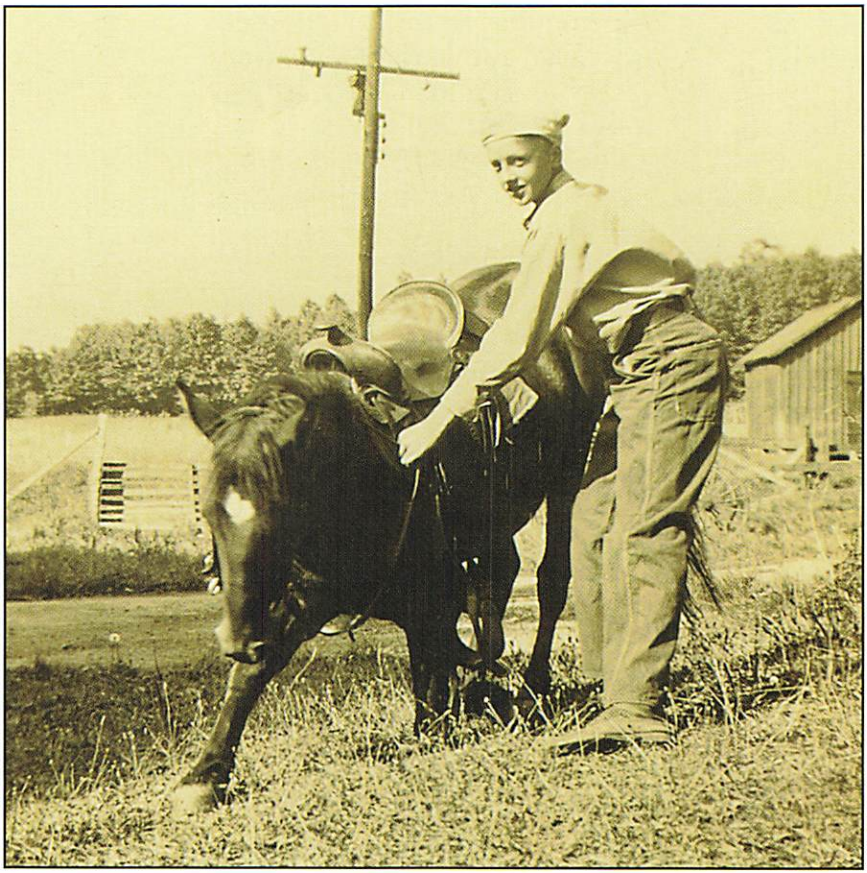

Roy Eugene Davis, age 13, with his horse, Flash.
Flash is bowing to a family audience.

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Offices and Retreat Center on CSA Lane off Lake Rabun Road, Lakemont.
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Spiritual growth can be quickened
by concentrated, right endeavor.
– Paramahansa Yogananda (1893 – 1952)

The Culmination of Right Living and Effective Meditation Practice

When Paramahansa Yogananda was preparing to leave India to come to America, his guru Sri Yukteswar told him to "teach Patanjali's Kriya Yoga"—which he did for more than 30 years.

Right living includes mental attitudes, personal behaviors, and actions of all kinds that are correct, proper, or appropriate. *Effective* meditation practice provides psychological and physical conditions that allow innate Self-knowledge to be revealed.

If spiritual awakening to the extent of Self-realization could be easily experienced, there would be many more enlightened men and women in our world than we currently have.

Spiritual enlightenment can occur during a sudden flash of insight or when our awareness has been prepared by superconscious meditation. The following "threads" of information written by a man known as Patanjali more than 2,000 years ago describe the inner way to experience conscious Self-knowing.

A steady flow of attention is concentration.
Concentration on an object of contemplation is meditation.
The self-shining of a meditative object is samadhi.
Those three, together, enable mastery of attention and complete identification of attention and awareness with that which is meditatively contemplated.
Mastery of meditative contemplation provides insight into what is examined and revelations of higher realities.
– Patanjali's Yoga-Sutra 3:1–5

Note that "steady" or unwavering concentration on an object or theme being contemplated is said to be meditation. That being so, if our attention is not completely focused, we are not really meditating, just as a person whose attention and awareness are not completely unified with his or her pure essence is not really practicing yoga (oneness). In the former instance, one may be

using preparatory methods to calm the mind and emotions; in the latter instance, one may still be practicing yogic procedures. When a spiritually enlightened yoga guru (teacher) advises disciples to "practice yoga," the meaning is to practice the samadhi of Self-realization.

Preliminary samadhi, when attention and awareness are identified with a mental concept, subtle sound, subjective light, an emotion, or physical sensations, doesn't result in spiritual enlightenment (knowledge of our true nature and of ultimate Reality). Even though one may be conscious of "seeming to be one" with the perceived experience, it may be more like a hypnotic (somewhat conscious sleep-like) state than superconsciousness that is life-enhancing.

Those three [practices] are internal in contrast to the five preceding practices.

They become external when samadhi without the support of an object of perception prevails. – *Yoga-Sutra 3:7,8*

Concentration, meditative contemplation, and samadhi mixed with thoughts, moods, or other objects of perception are inner, having attention removed from objective conditions. The five *external* practices described in chapter two of Patanjali's text include moral mental attitudes and personal behaviors; wisely disciplined thinking and actions; seated meditation posture; pranayama (extensions of inhalation, exhalation, and natural pauses with interludes of thought-free awareness); and detachment of attention from outer and inner conditions, including emotions and mental contents and changes.

Concentration, meditative contemplation, and experiences of oneness supported by what is seen, heard, felt, or thought are said to be external in contrast to the samadhi of flawless Self-knowing which occurs as a revelation: effortless emergence of our innate, unmodified awareness of our pure essence. There is then no further need to do anything.

Because superconsciousness is experienced when the mind is calm and emotions are settled, or when attention is detached from ordinary (changing, fragmented) mental states and states

of awareness, it isn't experienced when we are actively engaged in meditation practice or techniques which are preliminary, preparatory practices or when we are trying very hard to concentrate. Effective practice of meditation techniques or rituals have to be transcended so that our attention is more inward.

When we are very inward, we no longer think about small or self-centered interests or are concerned about the seeming gap or difference between our usual states of consciousness and what we aspire to realize. Instead, we are calmly surrendered (without egocentric thoughts, feelings, or needs) to our innate inclination to be increasingly, spiritually conscious. There is no desire to be Self-realized because there are no thoughts or feelings of being other than a unit of the pure essence of ultimate Reality—and no pride in being Self-realized because a former misperception of independent existence has been replaced with accurate Self-knowledge.

When there are no attachments to superconscious states or to perceptions of omnipotence or omniscience, and all impressions of subliminal [below the threshold of conscious awareness] restrictive influences have been dissolved, absolute, realized Self-knowledge prevails. – *Yoga Sutra 3:51*

This sutra describes complete liberation of consciousness that is no longer influenced by egocentric inclinations or conditions that may have formally blurred or fragmented it. Contemplate it now, and from time to time, to have your own, meaningful insights into what the author intended to communicate.

Only realized (experienced) Self-knowledge can free us from flawed beliefs, illusions, debilitating habits, addictive mental attitudes and feelings, illusions, and troublesome subconscious influences. The primary obstacle to Self-realization is a false or mistaken concept of self-identity that causes many people to presume their egocentric sense of self to be their real nature. They may then think of themselves as mere physical creatures and assert that higher realities don't exist.

Even when a person who believes that higher realities exist aspires to be Self-realized, if a mistaken sense of self is firmly

impressed in the mind, it may be difficult for them to renounce (let go of) or transcend it. The problem of mistaken self-identity can be solved by improving the ability to discriminate between what is real and what is not; acquiring accurate information and rationally examining it; calming the mind and clarifying awareness to allow innate Self-knowledge to emerge; and regular superconscious meditation practice that removes attention and awareness from egocentric conditions.

Few spiritual aspirants, including those who were initiated, have exceptional spiritual growth because they don't do what they know they should do to wisely live and skillfully meditate. They allow themselves to have a small sense of self-identity, moods, and immature mental attitudes, and to live aimlessly without imagining better circumstances or endeavoring to discover and bring forth their innate potential to experience and express excellence.

A common obstacle to spiritual growth is preoccupation with human concerns or needs, relationships, and activities which inclines many people to be egocentric (small-minded and personality oriented) instead of expansive and Self-determined. To be Self-determined is to have thoughts, emotions, and behaviors that are proper and for our highest good.

When you are with "truth seekers" at a meditation session, a weekend or week long retreat, or when having a private conversation, notice that they are often inclined to talk about personal concerns, problems, mental or emotional conflicts, fears, worries, and other matters unrelated to spiritual practices and being Self-realized. They do it because their thoughts, moods, private behaviors, and actions are seldom controlled and they rarely do anything to improve their understanding of higher realities or to nurture their spiritual growth. Whenever we are not having the kind of life, experiences, and circumstances we say we would like to have, it is almost always because we are not doing what we know we need to do to have what is wanted. Helpful things we can do:

- Improve Self- and God-awareness and our understanding of physical, mental, and spiritual principles of cause and effect. Effects of our physical actions are obvious. How our mental states, desires, imaginings, intentions, and expectations interact with cosmic mind and produce and attract corresponding effects can be known by careful observation. Our awareness of our true nature and of the wholeness of ultimate Reality can enable us to have the full support of the processes of nature, emerging events, and freely provided good fortune.
- Have an optimistic mental attitude and cultivate emotional maturity. Optimism enables us to see, produce, attract, and have ideal circumstances and relationships. Emotional maturity enables us to be responsible for our mental attitudes, behaviors, and circumstances.
- Meditate *superconsciously* every day. Note the emphasis on superconscious meditation. Passive, inattentive sitting is not transformative or mind- and consciousness-illuminating.
- Have major purposes clearly defined. Write and review them frequently. *Imagine them to be accomplished* and *feel the satisfaction of accomplishment*. Do what you are able to do to accomplish them and circle or otherwise indicate when a purpose is accomplished. Living will then be enjoyable and productive. If you do not always precisely define your aims and purposes, be constantly receptive to the unplanned good fortune that life can and will provide for you.
- Do only what is useful and life-enhancing and avoid what is not of enduring value. Decide how much time and attention to devote to family duties, work, social activity, recreation, metaphysical study, meditation practice, and what else you do. Live wisely with conscious intention, knowing that you are a spiritual being in a spiritual universe and can be fully, spiritually enlightened while embodied.

These guidelines that have been widely known for thousands of years can only be helpful when they are effectively applied.

The Constructive Influences of Inspired Aspiration to Accomplish All of Our Major Purposes

Inspired (spirit or soul empowered) aspirations (fervent desires to have purposes of value accomplished) constantly supported by resolute intentions and effective actions can keep us highly motivated and produce and attract ideal results.

Paramahansa Yogananda told me to constantly want to be Self-realized and encouraged me to live right and faithfully meditate. What he was, did, and said was always exemplary. To be in his presence, regardless of the occasion, was a great blessing and an opportunity to be aware of omnipresence and cosmic power of which he was always conscious. He asked his disciples to be mentally and spiritually attuned to his mind and essence because he wanted them to have access to the "great ocean" of ultimate Reality that he constantly experienced.

What a Self-realized guru can transmit to disciples by being a conduit through which higher consciousness-energy flows is far more meaningful than ordinary words—although a guru's words may also transmit redemptive influences when they are spoken with realized intention. Disciples have to be receptive to what is available to be received. Receptivity is improved by having a refined nervous system and mental and emotional calmness that allows intuition to be more reliable.

Partial spiritual awakening, arousal of dormant soul forces, or unusual meditation perceptions should not be mistaken for spiritual enlightenment. An examination of the experiences of enlightened people usually reveals that they were engaged in profound intellectual and intuitive Self-inquiry and meditative contemplation for many years before they were satisfied that they were fully enlightened.

The seer [true Self] observing what is seen remains pure.
Unwavering knowledge of ultimate Reality removes all delusions and illusions.
– *Yoga-Sutra 2:20 & 26*

Paramahansa Yogananda at a private birthday lunch
on January 5, late 1940s.

Kriya Yoga Traditions and Practices

Send questions, inquiries, or themes which may be used in a future issue of this publication—by regular mail or to rd@csa-davis.org

I was initiated into Kriya Yoga practices many years ago and have sincerely wanted to be spiritually enlightened even though I have not always been as focused or as regular in meditation practice as I should have been. I have had pleasant experiences and some helpful insights, but not any obvious superconscious or transcendent experiences.

People who *sincerely want to be spiritually enlightened* are self-disciplined, self-motivated, attentive to important matters, and meditate regularly. Now is the time in your life to decide to be completely committed to being spiritually enlightened. With complete commitment, it will be much easier to do what is best for you to do.

When I am reading philosophical literature, meditating, or just being still, I seem to be spiritually aware and very happy. When I return my attention to everyday circumstances, I tend to have egocentric mental attitudes, feelings, and behaviors. How can I avoid resuming my former mental attitudes, states of consciousness, and habits?

Nurture Self-awareness when you are engaged in ordinary relationships and activities. When you are aware of resuming former views and habits, resist that inclination. You will soon master your attention and behaviors. Doing that will empower you to concentrate better and meditate more effectively. In the course of time you will eventually be constantly Self-knowing.

I know several meditation methods and techniques. I can't use them all during one session. What is a helpful way to use them?

Do what provides the best results. During longer sessions several may be used at different times for special purposes. If

one method allows meditation to flow easily, use only it.

Some meditators like to start with prayerful acknowledgement of ultimate Reality, their true nature, and the lineage of gurus, followed by breath-awareness, kriya pranayama, being still while listening to Om, and aspiring to transcend Om.

Avoid thinking that a "new" or "unique" meditation method or a special mantra will enable you to make faster progress. A form of practice, or a technique, can relax your body and calm your mind, allowing you to more easily be aware of your pure essence. When silently sitting, anticipate and endeavor to be aware of a change of viewpoint and perception: from thinking about or contemplating your pure essence to *being it*.

Remember the significance of the second sutra in chapter one of Patanjali's text that describes the ideal result of meditation as effortless Self-revelation when all changes (*vrittis*) in the mind and awareness stop. That samadhi—conscious experience of one's pure essence—is Self-realization. To have that samadhi, live wisely and meditate effectively. Purposeless, undisciplined living and inattentive meditation are indications of insincerity and superficial thinking.

Identification of awareness with a perception of something is like a hypnotic state during which attention is fixated and confined which may further condition the subconscious level of the mind and produce an addiction to that kind of experience.

Conscious experience of our pure essence is a fully awake realization that purifies the mind and intellect and refines the nervous system and brain.

After your attention is internalized by kriya pranayama practice, be very still with your awareness in the crown chakra, detached from external and subjective (mental and emotional) conditions, with your mind and awareness empty. This is a direct way to experience the pure essence of ultimate Reality of which your essence is a unit. Because the essence of ultimate Reality is omnipresent, you don't have to go anywhere to know and experience it.

That realization is referred to—not described, because that which is devoid of characteristics cannot be mentally pictured or

explained with words—in some Buddhist texts as *emptiness*: the pure essence of ultimate Reality.

Liberation of consciousness results from knowing the truth of the pure essence of ultimate Reality by actual experience rather than having had a fleeting glimpse of it.

The Sanskrit word used to refer to transcendent realization is *kaivalya* (aloneness, isolation). Swami Sri Yukteswar used *Kaivalya Darsanam* as the title of the book Babaji told him to write in the late 1800s. *Darsana* (darshan) is defined as sight; to see; perceive; apprehend; realize. *Kaivalya Darsanam* can be translated as "absolute (pure, transcendent) realization." The English translation of the text was published many years later as *The Holy Science* with *Kaivalya Darsanam*—which more accurately describes the theme of the contents—at the top of the title page.

> Nowhere in the world is anything that purifies like Self- and God-knowledge. The devotee perfected in yoga [samadhi] discovers in the course of time that knowledge in the Self [pure essence].
> *– Bhagavad Gita 4:38*

How helpful to our spiritual well-being is it to practice Hatha Yoga or other procedures such as t'ai chi, qiGong, or the energization exercises innovated by Paramahansa Yogananda?

Any of those systems can be helpful in improving physical and mental well-being as a foundation for spiritual growth.

Hatha Yoga is best practiced quietly and thoughtfully as a prelude to meditation, rather than as a strenuous physical "workout."

T'ai chi or qiGong: *qi* (chi), "energy," and *gong*, "exercise" or "cultivation," can improve body balance and enhance awareness of energy flows in the body.

Paramahansa Yogananda innovated a system for energizing the body before he came to America. I briefly described it in my book *Seven Lessons in Conscious Living*:
page 85 in the original 8.5 x 11 workbook format;
page 105, 106 in the 6 x 9 book format.

Practices that improve concentration and vitalize the body can be helpful. I occasionally do a light Hatha Yoga routine with emphasis on asanas (postures) that gently stretch and twist the spine and a few energizing movements. I also swim almost daily during summer months and at other times exercise moderately at a gym two or three times a week.

Paramahansa Yogananda encouraged disciples to exercise regularly in ways that would invigorate the body and enhance awareness without causing strain or extreme tiredness.

What is the best motive to have for being on a spiritual path?

Various motives may incline a person to find a spiritual path. The best motive is to want to be spiritually enlightened. Some people are motivated by a desire to overcome limitations. They may view themselves as victims of circumstances over which they have little or no control and devote most of their efforts to trying to solve problems, recover from traumatic events or addictions, or avoid thoughts and feelings of shame, guilt, incompetence, or unworthiness.

Others want to be empowered to live effectively and more easily achieve personal goals and accomplish purposes.

It is normal to want to be healthy, happy, and freely functional, but we should not be completely satisfied with improved personal circumstances. We should also want to be spiritually enlightened to the extent that we experience and express excellence while always being aware of our pure essence and the wholeness of ultimate Reality.

Regardless of why we are attracted to a spiritual path, if we are self-disciplined, live right, think and act constructively, and meditate superconsciously, we will eventually awaken from a mistaken sense of self-identity to realization of our true nature.

Even before Self-realization occurs, powers of intellectual discernment and rational thinking should be improved so that the difference between our pure essence and what we observe is accurately known. It is important to have that knowledge because the primary cause of mental and emotional conflicts and personal limitations is mistakenly thinking that an egocentric,

personality-oriented perception of ourselves is what we are.

Seeing through and/or transcending the false sense of self enables spiritual growth (awakening) to quickly occur. Being unable or unwilling to do that keeps attention and awareness confined and limited.

I would like to be a Kriya Yoga teacher but am not sure I have the knowledge, confidence, or skills to do it. What should I do?

Although knowledge, confidence, and communication skills are necessary, most important are humility and willingness to be of service. When one is humble (without an inflated, unrealistic sense of self-importance) and willing to be of service, necessary knowledge, confidence, and communication skills can be more easily acquired.

I had intimations (intuitive glimpses) of my adult stage of life during early and middle teenage years. I saw (in my mind and awareness) that I would travel widely and speak and write about spiritual matters. I later learned about Yoga by reading books and experimenting with Hatha Yoga practices and meditation. I found my guru-connection when I read Paramahansa Yogananda's *Autobiography of a Yogi* during my 18th year and soon went to California to be with him. He ordained me two years later when I knew what to teach but still needed to learn how to do it. I had confidence to learn how to teach because I knew that my role was to communicate truth rather than to presume to be its source. Having represented our Kriya Yoga tradition for more than 60 years, I am still learning and, hopefully, improving.

A few years ago, we had several "teacher training" classes at CSA headquarters. Of more than 200 participants, fewer than 5% became effective representatives of our tradition.

I can only explain and demonstrate what and how to teach. Those who sincerely want to learn must be humble and responsive to guidance if results are to be worthwhile.

When I conduct a Kriya Initiation service, my outer role is to present the lifestyle regimens, meditation techniques, and a blessing. My inner role is to be a clear conduit through which God's presence and flows of grace through the lineage of gurus

can be transmitted.

It is not the destiny of all kriya initiates to be a teacher. All kriya initiates can and should represent the tradition by:

- Thinking and living constructively.
- Daily superconscious meditation.
- Acquiring accurate knowledge of their true nature and ultimate Reality.
- Improving their intellectual and intuitive powers.
- Thinking rationally.
- Living skillfully.
- Sharing information about our tradition with others who are sincerely interested in knowing about it. Avoid talking about it with people who cannot understand it. The easiest way to share information is to give them one of my books, *Truth Journal*, one of my DVD or CD talks, and/or our web site address.
- Regularly donate to support our services and projects.

An effective spiritual path (course of actions that can elicit our innate qualities and Self- and God-knowledge) must be "lived" with conscious intention. Complete dedication to such a course of right actions will culminate in mastery of mental attitudes and states of consciousness that allows flawless Self-realization to emerge.

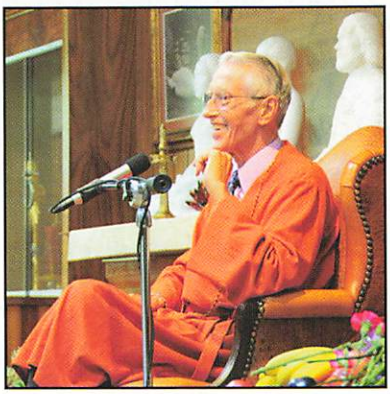
Striving, striving, until one day, behold!,
the aim is realized.
– Lahiri Mahasaya (1828 – 1895)

I never found the companion that
was as companionable as solitude.
– Henry David Thoreau (1817 – 1862)

Florida: January California: March

MEDITATION SEMINARS

Roy Eugene Davis



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Reservations Requested Only for the San Jose Seminar.

FLORIDA

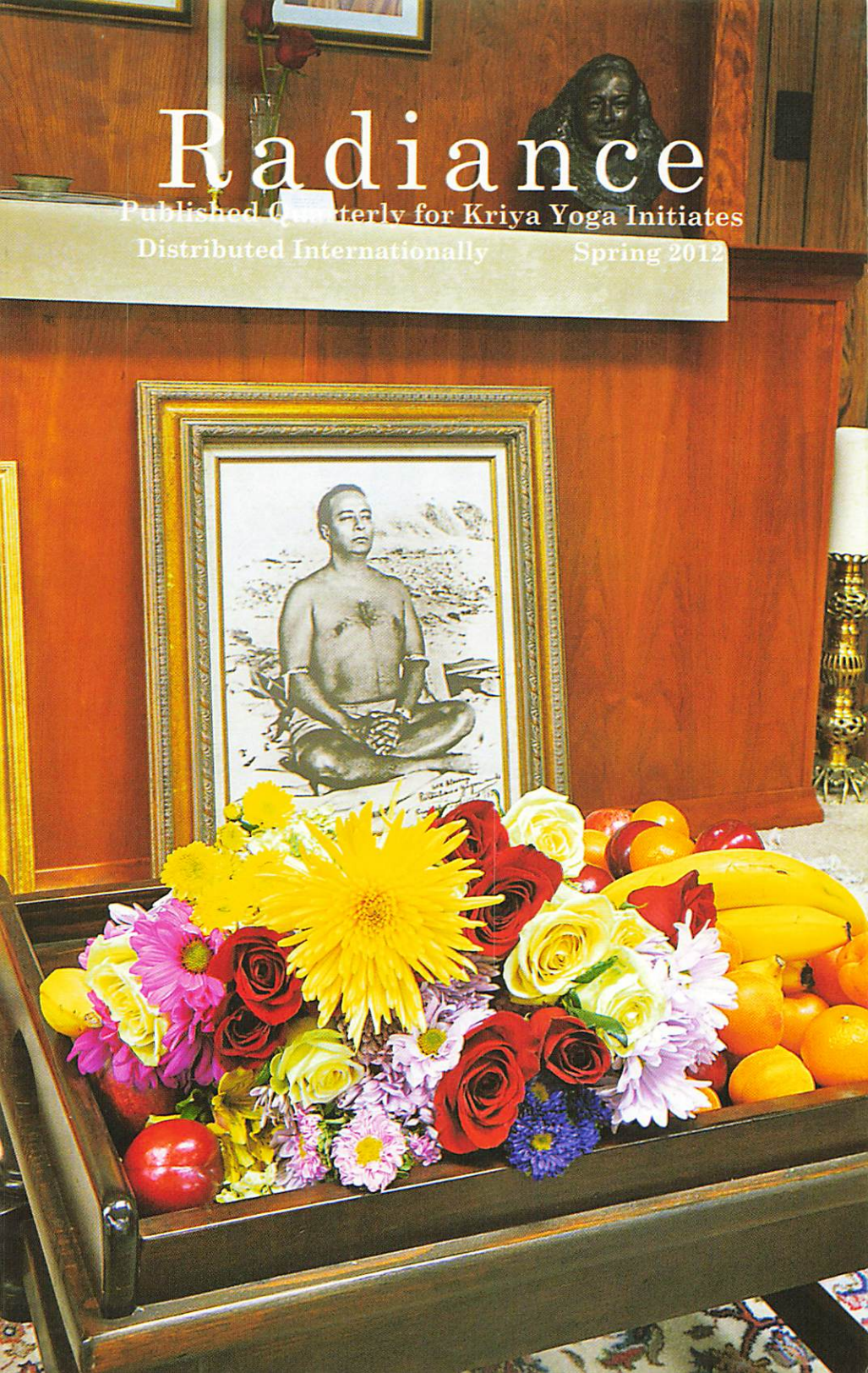
West Palm Beach Sunday, January 11 10 a.m. – 4 p.m.
EMBASSY SUITES HOTEL
1601 Belvedere Road (Near Airport)
10 a.m. Routines & Techniques 11:30 a.m. Lunch Break
1 p.m. Discipleship Guidelines 2:30 p.m. Kriya Yoga Initiation
www.csa-davis.org info@csa-davis.org Tel: 706-782-4723

Cape Coral Sunday, January 18 2 p.m. – 5 p.m.
CENTER FOR SPIRITUAL LIVING
406 SE 24 Avenue
Routines, Techniques & a Guided Practice Session
(Near Fort Myers) revgauvreau@gmail.com

CALIFORNIA

San Jose Saturday, March 21 10 a.m. – 4 p.m.
CENTER FOR SPIRITUAL ENLIGHTENMENT
1146 University Avenue
10 a.m. Routines & Techniques 11:30 a.m. Lunch Break
1 p.m. Discipleship Guidelines 2:30 p.m. Kriya Yoga Initiation
Reservations Requested to Assure Seating
info@csecenter.org www.csecenter.org Tel: 408-283-0221

Sacramento Sunday, March 22 2 p.m. – 5 p.m.
SACRAMENTO MARRIOTT
RANCHO CORDOVA HOTEL
11211 Point East Drive
Off Highway 50 at Sunrise Exit
Routines, Techniques & Guided Practice Session
sandranomer@comcast.net



Radiance

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Front cover photo: Below the altar in the CSA meditation hall after a Kriya Yoga initiation service. *Summer 2011.*

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Roy Eugene Davis presenting a meditation seminar in Santa Cruz, California. *Early 1970s.*

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Center for Spiritual Awareness P. O. Box 7 Lakemont, Georgia 30552
Offices and Retreat Center on CSA Lane off Lake Rabun Road, Lakemont.
Tel: 706-782-4723 weekdays 8 a.m. – 3 p.m. Fax: 706-782-4560
For retreat reservations and book orders: info@csa-davis.org
To e-mail Roy Eugene Davis: rd@csa-davis.org
Web site: www.csa-davis.org

Meditate each day more deeply than you did the day before.
– Paramahansa Yogananda (1893 – 1952)

Productive Meditation Practice

productive Yielding or bringing forth useful or favorable results.
meditation Undisturbed, concentrated contemplation.
practice Repeated, habitual doing of something to acquire proficiency and have intended results.

To have transformative, soul-satisfying results from meditation: 1) improve your understanding of the process; 2) practice regularly to have personal experience and insights.

If you are a novice meditator, first learn to meditate to relax the body and calm the mind. When you can easily do that, go deeper by withdrawing and detaching attention from mundane concerns and subjective conditions (emotions, thoughts, and fluctuations of awareness).

Helpful things to do:

- Have a specific place (a sacred space) for meditation practice. Use it only for meditation, prayer, or other forms of contemplation of higher realities.
- Have a specific way to begin the session so you can proceed without delay. Speak an invocation or affirmative statement as you turn your attention inward.
- If meditation immediately flows easily, go along with it. If it does not immediately flow easily, pray, affirm, or use a meditation technique (breath awareness, mantra, kriya pranayama). When a technique is no longer needed, stop using it.
- When sitting, intently observing and waiting, it can be helpful to have your attention and awareness in the spiritual eye center (the front lobes of the brain) and higher brain. Don't strain or exert effort; just "be there."
- Listen to subtle sound frequencies in your ears or around your head. Think of them as aspects of the omnipresent Om vibration. Merge with the sound for a while, then go beyond it. Contemplate your essence of being as pure consciousness.

Keep this Issue of *Radiance Where You Meditate*

Frequently read these selected excerpts from the *Bhagavad Gita* and *Patanjali's Yoga-Sutra*

Holding the body, head, and neck erect, motionless, steadily gazing into the spiritual eye, serene, fearless, established in self-control with mental impulses subdued, contemplating the supreme Reality, the devotee should sit, devoted to the highest realization.
– The Bhagavad Gita 6:13,14

Patanjali's Yoga Sutra, Chapter Three
Exceptional Powers of Perception
Extraordinary and Abilities

1. An unwavering flow of attention is concentration.
2. Unwavering concentration on the object contemplated is meditation.
3. The self-shining of the object of meditative contemplation is samadhi.
4. Concentration, meditation, and samadhi, together, result in mastery of attention and identification with the object contemplated.
5. Mastery of meditation provides insight into what is examined and revelations of higher realities.
6. Meditation should be practiced in stages.
7. These three practices (concentration, meditation, samadhi) are internal as compared with the five preceding practices (yama, niyama, asana, pranayama, pratyhara: withdrawal of attention from all external and subjective conditions).
8. They are external when samadhi without the support of an object prevails.
9. Superior, constructive influences of (higher) samadhi overcome and eliminate restrictive subliminal (below the threshold of conscious awareness) restrictions.

After I met Paramahansa Yogananda, in December, 1949, I meditated mornings and evenings for thirty minutes. On some weekends I meditated for a hour or more. I later meditated one or more hours each morning and evening.

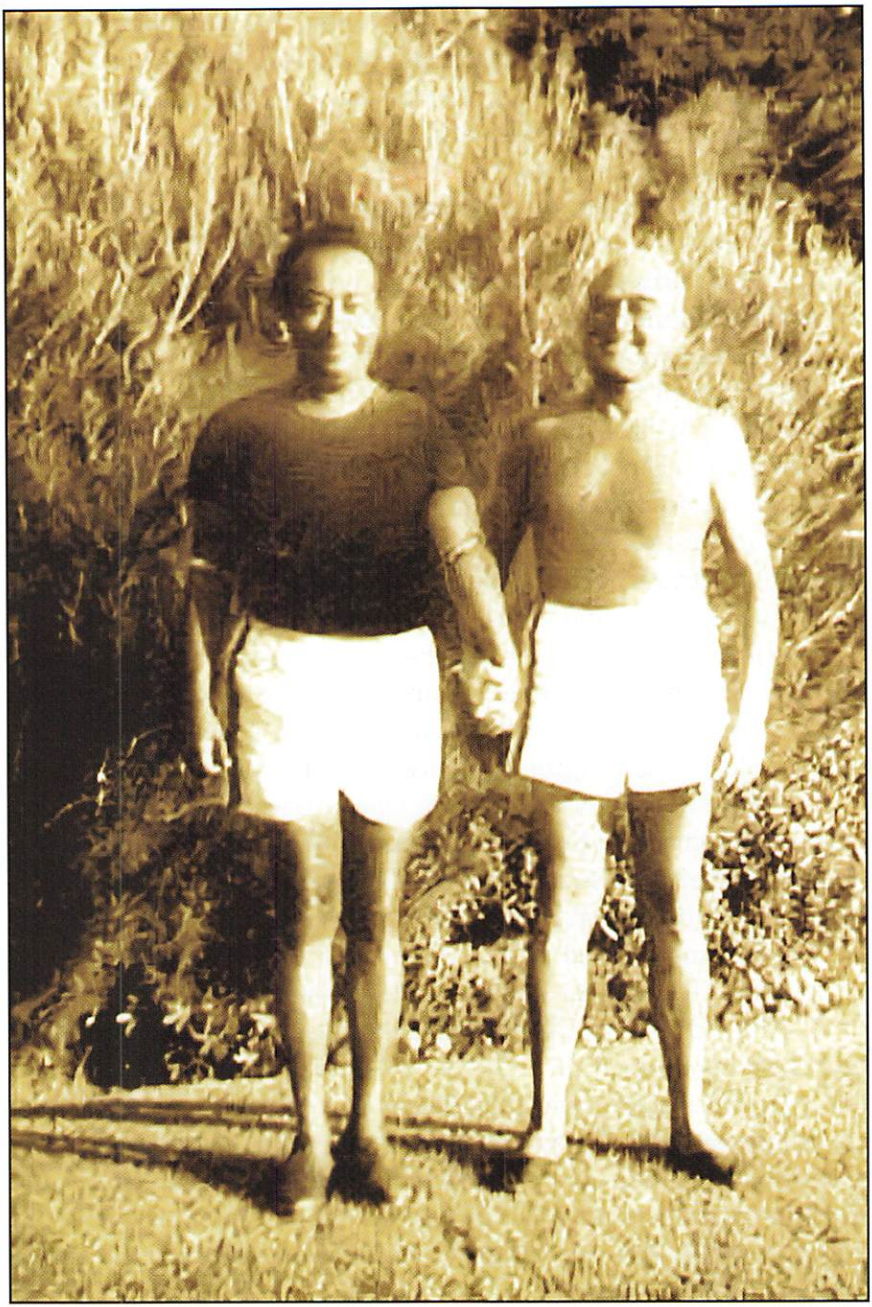
I discovered that regular, attentive practice, enabled me to become familiar with subtle changes in mental processes and states of awareness that can occur during a meditation session and to have occasional, unexpected perceptions that provided glimpses of higher realities. In the course of time, it was easier to sit for one, two, or three hours and (usually) stay alert.

I discovered that what appeared to be astral perceptions or visions were either brain-produced phenomena or dream-like mental perceptions, similar to those which occur during normal sleep but more vivid. I also discovered that occasions of what seemed to be profound absorption of attention and awareness were not transformative and didn't result in obvious evidence of illumination of consciousness after a meditation session.

Preliminary samadhi is experienced when awareness identifies with objects of perception such as a subjective light, a subtle sound frequency, joyousness, or a mental concept. Similar to sleep, it does not illumine the mind or consciousness.

An altered state of ordinary or egocentric consciousness may temporarily provide a different point of view or enable a person to demonstrate some unusual abilities, but does not bring forth spiritual qualities and innate Self-knowledge.

By eliciting altered states of egocentric consciousness, some people may be able to demonstrate unusual powers of memory or other mental skills, or by self-suggestion somewhat regulate their blood pressure or heal or improve physical ailments (skin conditions are especially responsive) without experiencing an improvement of psychological disposition, moral behavior, or spiritual growth. Some Catholic monastics produced stigma (marks) on their hands and bodies like those they imagined were on the body of Jesus by fervently wishing to suffer as they imagined he suffered when he was crucified.



Paramahansa Yogananda and James J. Lynn (Rajarsi Janakananda)
Early 1940s

Even spiritually inclined people with "saintly" characteristics who are skillful meditators may not be as Self-realized or knowledgeable about higher realities as they think they are or as others may presume them to be. I have known a few practitioners of yoga who regularly prayed and meditated, and were usually kind and well-mannered, who were provincial (small-minded), neurotic, manipulative, or arrogant.

In Patanjali's Yoga-Sutra (see page 4) advanced stages of skillful meditation practice are described. Notice that concentration, meditation, and samadhi, said to be internal practices when compared with preliminary practices, are external when compared with samadhi that does not need objects of perception to support it. The latter samadhi is liberating because it provides actual experience of one's essence of being and accurate know-ledge of higher realties that banishes false ideas.

Instantaneous awakening from an egocentric state of consciousness to Self- and God-realization is rare. Before trying to have samadhi with or without the support of objects of perception, acquire the ability to easily meditate superconsciously. You will then have a firm foundation for long-term meditation which will enable you to progressively awaken through stages of spiritual growth.

James Lynn, my brother disciple who our guru told me was "very spiritually advanced," experienced a meditative state of ecstasy shortly after being initiated in the early 1930s. A few years later, after much meditation practice and with Paramahansa Yogananda's guidance, he was able to have transcendent states of samadhi. Even then, he had to continue to meditate deeply for several more years to have his consciousness purified and liberated when he left his body in 1955.

In the early 1950s, when I was at public gatherings at Self-Realization Fellowship headquarters (Christmas meditations, kriya initiations, and on Paramahansa Yogananda's birthdays) at which Mr. Lynn was present, he was always calm and radiant. On one occasion, he invited me to meditate with him for several minutes on the lawn near the Encinitas SRF Hermitage building overlooking the Pacific Ocean.

In the *Bhagavad Gita* (chapter 18, verse 65) the allegorical character Krishna (which represents enlightened consciousness) informed Arjuna (the truth-seeker) how one's consciousness can be restored to its original wholeness:

> Meditating on me, devoted to me, offering everything to me, surrendering to me, you will surely come to me. This I promise, for you are dear to me.
>
> *Esoteric (Inner) Meaning*
>
> Meditatively looking at your pure-conscious essence with sustained aspiration to know it, dissolving all thoughts and inclinations in it, surrendering (giving up completely) the mistaken sense of self-identity, you will surely realize (experience and accurately know) it.

When you are meditating and your mind is calm, contemplate the pure-conscious aspect of ultimate Reality. Let your attention be attracted by it. Renounce all of your feelings, thoughts, and inclinations in favor of directly knowing *that* which you aspire to know. You will then be meditating with all of your heart (essence of being). When your awareness is detached from all that you are not (body, emotions, mind, personality characteristics, and a confined sense of self), you will abide in conscious Self-knowing.

To be Self-realized, it is necessary to grow to emotional maturity and let go of and rise above mental attitudes, opinions, psychological characteristics, behaviors, and relationships that are not compatible with clear states of consciousness. It is not possible to be spiritually enlightened (knowledgeable) and unenlightened (ignorant of the facts of life) just as we cannot effectively function as mature, adult human beings while clinging to childish attitudes, moods, and behaviors.

Affirm With Conviction

Daily, I meditate to elicit superconscious states, purify my mind, clarify my awareness, and completely awaken to Self-realization.

I usually meditate once a day for about 30 minutes. Is that often enough and long enough to enable me to experience transformative states of consciousness?

Short meditation sessions are good for managing stress and keeping awareness clear. Longer sessions (forty-five minutes to an hour or more) are recommended for deep, introspective contemplation. Fifteen to 30 minutes are usually necessary to get settled, relaxed, and somewhat focused. Regular thirty minute sessions can refresh your mind and nervous system.

I tend to waver in my intention to be Self-realized. Sometimes I am enthusiastic and focused on purposeful living and spiritual practices. A other times, I aimlessly drift and allow my mind to be preoccupied with mundane interests. How can I be more constructively motivated?

Seriously think about what you do, and why. Then estimate the number of years remaining in your current incarnation. Do you think that you will be Self-realized in your current incarnation if you continue to do what you have been doing? What do you think you should do to make your life more worthwhile? Do you have the freedom (or can you arrange) to do it? Write a course of action that you think will be most helpful for you to immediately implement, then go forward. Don't expect others to motivate you. Don't wait until unwanted circumstances force you to make the right decisions.

It may be helpful to have inspirational books or recordings conveniently available and pictures of spiritually enlightened people to remind you of what is possible for you to experience.

The most useful thing to do is to daily meditate until your awareness is clear and you are vividly aware of your essence of being and the wholeness of life. When awareness of your true nature and your relationship with the Infinite and its processes is constant, you will always be Self-motivated.

Should I meditatively contemplate the pure-conscious aspect of ultimate Reality or my pure-conscious essence?

Either way of contemplating will result in the same realization. Meditating on the pure-conscious aspect of ultimate Reality may enable you to more easily detach your attention from a self-centered point of view or the characteristics of your personality. When knowledge of your pure-conscious essence as a unit of the pure-conscious aspect of ultimate Reality is flawless, you will know that there is no difference between your essence and that Reality. In some philosophical systems that evolved in India, it is said that our true Self should be worshipped (honored and acknowledged) until it is fully realized. People who don't know their essence (true nature) are inclined to think that they are not a spiritual being and that ultimate Reality or some kind of deity is other than them. With spiritual enlightenment, the truth is clearly known.

Explain more about how to surrender to ultimate Reality. What can be done to improve our ability to do it?

To surrender is to stop resisting, to completely give up and let go of whatever interferes with being fully conscious or Self-knowing. It is not always easy to do—even for those who would like to do it. After many years of identifying with a mistaken sense of self, personality traits, mental and emotional states, habits, the opinions and behaviors of others, and environmental conditions, souls sometimes prefer to be as they are, or are reluctant to explore what might exist beyond the boundaries of their consciousness or the limits of their imagination.

Improve your understanding of ultimate Reality and your true nature, intellect, mind, ego (illusional or mistakenly perceived sense of self-identity), body, and environment. Improve your intellectual, mental, and intuitive abilities and choose to live responsibly and skillfully. You don't have to wait until you are fully spiritually enlightened and liberated to live freely and enjoyably, have an extensive understanding of higher realities, and be Self-realized.

To be Self-realized with some karma (accumulated subconscious mental influences) yet to be weakened and neutralized and a few erroneous ideas yet to be discarded is to be almost free or liberated from restrictive conditions. When you are at that stage of spiritual awakening, avoid making the mistake of thinking that you are completely enlightened. Continue in the right way until all levels of your mind are purified and your consciousness is fully illumined by the radiance of your pure essence of being.

Remember that *complete* Kriya Yoga practice includes mental, emotional, physical, and behavioral disciplines; profound Self-inquiry using discrimination and regular superconscious meditation; and surrender (of an egocentric or ordinary sense of self-identity) to allow Self-realization to occur.

Note: Read the entire text of Patanjali's Yoga-Sutra with a concise commentary in my book *The Science of Self-Realization*. Available by mail or at **www.csa-davis.org**
Italian language edition at **www.marcovalerio.com**
India: my earlier Yoga-Sutra commentary in my English language edition of *The Path of Light* is published Motilal Banarsidass. At their bookstores in Delhi, Patna, Varanasi, Calcutta, Chennai, Bangalore, Mumbai, and Pune. Also at **www.mlbd.com**
German language edition *Pfad des Lichts*, **www.kriya-yoga.de**

To what extent can a guru or competent spiritual teacher assist a person to grow spiritually?

A competent teacher who is spiritually awake can only assist to the extent that a disciple (student or learner) is capable of learning, willing to learn, and willing and able to apply what is learned. The truth seeker has to be receptive and sufficiently emotionally mature to assume responsibility for his or her behaviors and circumstances. Many people who say they would like to have the guidance of a guru (teacher) are not yet intellectually, mentally, or emotionally prepared to have that kind of relationship. Many men and women who were initiated by Paramahansa Yogananda maintained the relationship for only a few months or years, then either went to other teachers, re-

sumed (or adopted) traditional religious practices, or became disinterested in spiritual matters. Many who stayed in contact with him, and benefited from their personal association and spiritual practices, didn't always fully understand what he said or taught by his actions. Some didn't have the ability to experience transcendent superconsciousness when they meditated. A few who quietly adhered to holistic lifestyle regimens and spiritual practices for many years were highly Self-realized.

A competent guru patiently works with disciples according to their capacity to learn and practice. Some disciples easily meditate effectively while others quickly comprehend higher realities, nurture devotion, perform selfless service, or harmoniously integrate several constructive practices. A meaningful guru-disciple relationship should continue until the disciple is completely spiritually enlightened.

Disciples who have complete liberation of consciousness as their highest aim think and act in ways that allow it to be most easily and quickly realized.

You, and other spiritual teachers, emphasize the ideal of being spiritually enlightened in one incarnation. Is it really necessary to aspire to that? Won't our natural evolution eventually result in our spiritual enlightenment?

When our innate qualities and knowledge are Self-revealed, some of the future troubles that we might have had are avoided and we are healthier, happier, wiser and more capable of being helpful to others. In our current era, it is necessary for most people to improve their intellectual powers and to awaken from modified states of consciousness to superconsciousness in order to further awaken to Self-realization, cosmic consciousness, and liberation of consciousness.

Although trends of evolution are supportive and influential, we have to help ourselves. Paramahansa Yogananda said that Kriya Yoga practice quickens human evolution by purifying the mind, clarifying awareness, refining the nervous system, and developing areas of the brain that process consciousness.

Some philosophical systems (and yoga teachers) say that the culmination of effective spiritual practice is realization (conscious experience) of one's true nature as a unit of an ultimate Reality. Others say that the final stage of awakening is union with God. Which view is true?

Yoga is the uniting or joining of attention and awareness with one's essence—not the uniting or joining of our essence with God. To say that the aim of spiritual practice is to be united with the Reality referred to as God is to suggest that until we are joined with it we are separate from it. All beings as units of the pure-conscious aspect of ultimate Reality are never other than what they are—even when they erroneously think or feel otherwise.

It is common to hear some truth seekers say, "Even though I sincerely try to do God's will and daily pray to know him, God has not yet come to me or answered my prayers." Their self-created difficulty is caused by trying to relate to that Reality as they mistakenly imagine it to be rather than as it is.

When occasional authentic insights into higher realities are had in spite of one's erroneous ideas regarding philosophical concepts and spiritual practices, they should be contemplated, understood, and allowed to replace false ideas and notions. It is not spiritually beneficial to cling to immature or traditional views and behaviors. To have faster spiritual growth, discard all delusions (false ideas, beliefs, and fantasies).

Meditation results in revelation. Out of the reality of one's being arises the perception and experience of the pure Self. Self-realization is the Self-revelation of our true nature by the illumination of our pure consciousness.
– Lahiri Mahasaya

Human beings are intuitively aware of the existence of a Reality of which the components of the physical world are but attributes.
– Swami Sri Yukteswar

NEWS

Information about the 4th International Kriya Yoga Congress is on the back cover of this issue. *This special event is only convened every three years, so plan now to attend this one.* Make reservations when your travel plans are firm.

The opening and closing days coincide with the mahasamadhi (departure from the physical body) of Paramahansa Yogananda (1952) and Swami Sri Yukteswar (1936). Five days after Paramahansa Yogananda's passing, Faye Wright* informed me that it was his wish that I be the minister of the Self-Realization Fellowship Center in Phoenix, Arizona where I served for four years.

*Faye Wright became the president of SRF after James J. Lynn's passing in early 1955 and was later known by her monastic name, Daya Mata. She left her body on November 30, 2010, in her 96th year. After meeting our guru in Salt Lake City, Utah, when she was 17 years of age, she moved to southern California. She and her sister, Virginia, were Paramahansaji's confidential secretaries for many years. Their brother, Richard, traveled with Paramahansaji to India in 1935. Excerpts from Richard Wright's travel diary are published in *Autobiography of a Yogi*.

Meditation and lifestyle routines taught by Roy Eugene Davis. Kriya initiation Thursdays at 1 p.m. during the week long retreats. Guest houses. Vegetarian meals served.

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